SERMONS

ON

Several Occasions:

IN

THREE VOLUMES.

BY

JOHN WESLEY, *M. A.*

Fellow of *Lincoln-College*, OXFORD.

VOL. I.

The SECOND EDITION.

LONDON,

Printed by W. BOWYER: And sold by T. TRYE, near Gray's-Inn Gate, Holbourn; and at the Foundery, near Upper Moorfields.

MDCCLIV.

THE

PREFACE.

1. THE *following Sermons contain the Subſtance of what I have been preaching, for between Eight and Nine Years laſt paſt. During that Time I have frequently ſpoken in Publick, on every Subject in the enſuing Collection: And I am not conſcious, that there is any One Point of Doctrine, on which I am accuſtom'd to ſpeak in public, which is not here, incidentally, if not profeſſedly, laid before every Chriſtian Reader. Every*

ſerious Man, who peruſes theſe, will therefore ſee in the cleareſt Manner, what theſe Doctrines are which I embrace and teach, as the Eſſentials of True Religion.

2. *But I am thoroughly ſenſible, theſe are not propoſed, in ſuch a Manner as ſome may expect. Nothing here appears in an elaborate, elegant or oratorical Dreſs. If it had been my Deſire or Deſign to write thus, my Leiſure would not permit. But in truth I at preſent deſign'd nothing leſs; For I now write (as I generally ſpeak)* ad populum: *To the Bulk of Mankind, to thoſe who neither reliſh nor underſtand the Art of Speaking: But who notwithſtanding are competent Judges of thoſe Truths, which are neceſſary to preſent and future Happineſs. I mention this, that curious Readers may ſpare themſelves the Labour, of ſeeking for what they will not find.*

3. *I deſign plain Truth for plain People. Therefore of ſet Purpoſe I abſtain from*

form all nice and philoſophical Speculations, from all perplext and intricate Reaſonings; and as far as poſſible, from even the Shew of Learning, unleſs in ſometimes citing the Original Scriptures. I labour to avoid all Words which are not eaſy to be underſtood, all which are not uſed in common Life: And in particular, thoſe kind of Technical Terms, that ſo frequently occur in Bodies of Divinity, thoſe Modes of ſpeaking which Men of Reading are intimately acquainted with, but which to Common People are an unknown Tongue. Yet I am not aſſured, that I do not ſometimes ſlide into them unawares: It is ſo extremely natural to imagine, that a Word which is familiar to ourſelves, is ſo to all the World.

4. *Nay, my Deſign is, in ſome Senſe to forget all that ever I have read in my Life. I mean to ſpeak, in the general, as if I had never read one Author, Antient or Modern (Always excepting the Inſpired.) I am perſuaded, that on the*

one hand, this may be a Means of enabling me more clearly to expreſs the Sentiments of my Heart, while I ſimply follow the Chain of my own Thoughts, without intangling myſelf with thoſe of other Men: And that, on the other, I ſhall come with fewer Weights upon my Mind, with leſs of Prejudice and Prepoſſeſſion, either to ſearch for myſelf, or to deliver to others, the naked Truths of the Goſpel.

5. *To candid, reaſonable Men, I am not afraid to lay open what have been the inmoſt Thoughts of my Heart. I have thought, "I am a Creature of a Day, paſſing thro' Life, as an Arrow thro' the Air. I am a Spirit, come from* GOD, *and returning to* GOD: *Juſt hovering over the Great Gulph; till a few Moments hence, I am no more ſeen; I drop into an Unchangeable Eternity! I want to know one Thing, the Way to Heaven: How to land ſafe on that happy Shore.* GOD *himſelf has condeſcended to teach*

the

the Way; for this very End he came from Heaven. He hath written it down in a Book. O give me that Book! At any Price, give me the Book of GOD! I have it: Here is Knowledge enough for me. Let me be Homo unius libri. *Here then I am, far from the buſy Ways of Men. I ſit down alone: Only GOD is here. In his Preſence I open, I read his Book; for this End, to find the Way to Heaven. Is there a Doubt concerning the Meaning of what I read? Does any Thing appear dark or intricate? I lift up my Heart to the Father of Lights.* "*Lord, is it not thy Word,* If any Man lack Wiſdom, let him aſk of GOD? *Thou* giveſt liberally and upbraideſt not. *Thou haſt ſaid,* If any be willing to do thy Will, he ſhall know. *I am willing to do. Let me know thy Will.*" *I then ſearch after and conſider parallel Paſſages of Scripture,* comparing Spiritual Things with Spiritual. *I meditate thereon, with all the Attention and*

Ear-

Earneſtneſs of which my Mind is capable. If any Doubt ſtill remain, I conſult thoſe who are experienced in the Things of GOD: *And then, the Writings whereby being dead, they yet ſpeak. And what I thus learn, that I teach.*

6. *I have accordingly ſet down in the following Sermons, what I find in the Bible concerning the Way to Heaven; with a View to diſtinguiſh this Way of* GOD, *from all thoſe which are the Inventions of Men. I have endeavour'd to deſcribe the true, the Scriptural, Experimental Religion, ſo as to omit nothing which is a Real Part thereof, and to add nothing thereto which is not. And herein it is more eſpecially my Deſire, Firſt, to guard thoſe who are juſt ſetting their Faces toward Heaven, (and who having little Acquaintance with the Things of* GOD, *are the more liable to be turn'd out of the Way) from Formality, from mere Outſide Religion, which has almoſt driven Heart-Religion out of the World:*

And

And Secondly, To warn thoſe who know the Religion of the Heart, the Faith which worketh by Love, leſt at any time they make void the Law thro' Faith, and ſo fall back into the Snare of the Devil.

7. *By the Advice and at the Requeſt of ſome of my Friends, I have prefixt to the other Sermons contain'd in this Volume, three Sermons of my own and one of my Brother's, preach'd before the Univerſity of* Oxford. *My Deſign required ſome Diſcourſes on thoſe Heads. And I preferr'd theſe before any others, as being a ſtronger Anſwer than any which can be drawn up now, to thoſe who have frequently aſſerted, "That we have changed our Doctrine of late, and do not preach now, what we did ſome Years ago." Any Man of Underſtanding may now judge for himſelf, when he has compared the latter with the former Sermons.*

8. *But ſome may ſay, I have miſtaken the Way myſelf, altho' I take upon me to teach it to others. It is probable, many will*

will think this, and it is very poſſible, that I have. But I truſt, whereinſoever I have miſtaken, my Mind is open to Conviction. I ſincerely deſire to be better informed. I ſay to GOD *and Man, "What "I know not, teach thou me!"*

9. *Are you perſuaded, you ſee more clearly than me? It is not unlikely that you may. Then, treat me, as you would deſire to be treated yourſelf upon a Change of Circumſtances. Point me out a better Way than I have yet known. Shew me it is ſo, by plain Proof of Scripture. And if I linger in the Path I have been accuſtomed to tread, and am therefore unwilling to leave, labour with me a little, take me by the Hand, and lead me as I am able to bear. But be not diſpleaſed if I intreat you, not to beat me down, in order to quicken my Pace: I can go but feebly and ſlowly at beſt; then, I ſhould not be able to go at all. May I not requeſt of you further, Not to give me hard Names, in order to bring me into the*

Right

Right Way? Suppoſe I was ever ſo much in the wrong, I doubt this would not ſet me right. Rather, it would make me run ſo much the farther from you, and ſo get more and more out of the Way.

10. *Nay, perhaps, if you are angry, ſo ſhall I be too; and then there will be ſmall Hopes of finding the Truth. If once Anger ariſe,* ἤυτε κάπνος *(as* Homer *ſomewhere expreſſes it) this Smoke will ſo dim the Eyes of my Soul, that I ſhall be able to ſee nothing clearly. For* GOD's *ſake, if it be poſſible to avoid it, let us not provoke one another to Wrath. Let us not kindle in each other this Fire of Hell; much leſs, blow it up into a Flame. If we could diſcern Truth by that dreadful Light, would it not be Loſs rather than Gain? for how far is Love, even with many wrong Opinions, to be prefer'd before Truth itſelf without Love? We may die without the Knowledge of many Truths, and yet be carried into* Abraham's *Boſom. But if we die without*

out Love, what will Knowledge avail? Juſt as much as it avails the Devil and his Angels!

The GOD of Love forbid we ſhould ever make the Trial! May he prepare us for the Knowledge of all Truth, by filling our Hearts with all his Love, and with all Joy and Peace in believing.

SALVATION by FAITH.

A

SERMON

PREACHED AT

St. *MARY*'s *OXFORD*,

BEFORE THE

UNIVERSITY,

On JUNE 18, 1738.

EPHES. ii. 8.

By Grace ye are ſaved through Faith.

1. ALL the Bleſſings which God hath beſtowed upon Man are of his mere Grace, Bounty or Favour: His Free, undeſerved Favour; Favour altogether undeſerved; Man having no Claim to the leaſt of his Mercies. It was free Grace that *formed Man of the Duſt of the Ground, and breathed into him a living Soul*, and ſtamped on that Soul the Image of God, and *put all Things under his Feet*. The ſame Free Grace continues to us, at this Day, Life and Breath, and all Things. For there is nothing we are, or have, or do, which can deſerve the leaſt Thing at God's Hand. *All our Works thou, O God, haſt wrought in us.* Theſe, therefore, are ſo many more Inſtances of Free Mercy; And whatever Righteouſneſs may be found in Man, this is alſo the Gift of God.

2. Wherewithal then ſhall a ſinful Man atone for any the leaſt of his Sins? With his own Works? No. Were they ever ſo many or holy, they are not his own, but God's. But indeed they are all Unholy and Sinful themſelves, ſo that every one of them needs a freſh Atonement. Only corrupt Fruit grows on a corrupt Tree. And his Heart is altogether corrupt and abominable; being *come ſhort of the Glory of God*, the glorious

Righteouſneſs at firſt impreſs'd on his Soul, after the Image of his Great Creator. Therefore, having nothing, neither Righteouſneſs nor Works to plead, his *Mouth is utterly ſtopt before God.*

3. If then ſinful Man find Favour with God, it is *Grace upon Grace.* If GOD vouchſafe ſtill to pour freſh Bleſſings upon us, yea, the Greateſt of all Bleſſings, *Salvation*; what can we ſay to theſe Things, but *Thanks be unto GOD for his Unſpeakable Gift!* And thus it is. Herein *GOD commendeth his Love toward us, in that while we were yet Sinners, Chriſt died* to ſave us. *By Grace then are ye ſaved through Faith.* Grace is the Source, Faith the Condition, of Salvation.

Now, that we fall not ſhort of the Grace of GOD, it concerns us carefully to enquire,

I. What Faith it is through which we are ſaved?

II. What is the Salvation which is through Faith?

III. How we may anſwer ſome Objections.

I. What Faith it is through which we are ſaved?

1. And firſt, It is not barely the Faith of a Heathen. Now GOD requireth of a Heathen to believe, *That GOD is*; *that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him*; and that he is to be ſought by *glorifying him as GOD, by giving him Thanks* for all Things; and by a careful Practice of Moral Virtue, of Juſtice, Mercy and Truth toward their Fellow Creatures. A *Greek* or *Roman* therefore, yea, a *Scythian* or *Indian*, was without Excuſe if he did not believe thus much. The Being and Attributes of GOD, a future State

of

of Reward and Puniſhment, and the obligatory Nature of Moral Virtue. For this is barely the Faith of a Heathen.

2. Nor, 2*dly*, Is it the Faith of a Devil, tho' this goes much farther than that of a Heathen. For the Devil believes, not only, that there is a wiſe and powerful GOD, Gracious to reward, and Juſt to puniſh, but alſo, that JESUS is the Son of GOD, the CHRIST, the SAVIOUR of the World. So we find him declaring, in expreſs Terms, *Luke* iv. 34. *I know Thee, who Thou art, the Holy One of GOD.* Nor can we doubt but that unhappy Spirit believes all thoſe Words, which came out of the Mouth of the Holy One; yea, and whatſoever elſe was written by thoſe Holy Men of old; of two of whom he was compell'd to give that glorious Teſtimony, *Theſe Men are the Servants of the moſt high GOD, who ſhew unto you the Way of Salvation.* Thus much then the great Enemy of GOD and Man believes, and trembles in believing, That *GOD was made manifeſt in the Fleſh*, That he will *tread all Enemies under his Feet*, and that *all Scripture was given by Inſpiration of GOD.* Thus far goeth the Faith of a Devil.

3. *Thirdly*, The Faith through which we are ſaved, in that Senſe of the Word which will hereafter be explained, is not barely that which the *Apoſtles* themſelves had while CHRIST was yet upon Earth; tho' they ſo believed on him as to *leave all and follow him*; altho' they had then Power to work Miracles, to *heal all manner of Sickneſs, and all manner of Diſeaſe*; yea, they had then *Power and Authority over all Devils:* And which is beyond all this, were ſent by their Maſter to *preach the Kingdom of GOD.*

4. What Faith is it then through which we are ſaved? It may be anſwered, firſt, in general, It is a Faith in CHRIST; CHRIST, and GOD through CHRIST, are the proper Object of it. Herein therefore, it is ſufficiently, abſolutely, diſtinguiſhed from the Faith either of ancient or modern Heathens. And from the Faith of a Devil, it is fully diſtinguiſhed by this, It is not barely a Speculative, Rational Thing, a cold, lifeleſs Aſſent, a Train of Ideas in the Head; but alſo a Diſpoſition of the Heart. For thus ſaith the Scripture, *With the Heart, Man believeth unto Righteouſneſs.* And, *If thou ſhalt confeſs with thy Mouth the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe with thy* Heart, *that GOD hath raiſed Him from the Dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved.*

5. And herein does it differ from that Faith which the Apoſtles themſelves had while our Lord was on Earth, that it acknowledges the Neceſſity and Merit of his Death, and the Power of his Reſurrection. It acknowledges his Death as the only ſufficient Means of redeeming Man from Death Eternal; and his Reſurrection as the Reſtoration of us all to Life and Immortality: Inaſmuch as *he was delivered for our Sins, and roſe again for our Juſtification.* Chriſtian Faith is then, not only an Aſſent to the whole Goſpel of CHRIST, but alſo a full Reliance on the Blood of CHRIST, a Truſt in the Merits of his Life, Death, and Reſurrection; a Recumbency upon him as our Atonement and our Life; as *given for us*, and *living in us.* It is a ſure Confidence which a Man hath in GOD, that through the Merits of CHRIST, *his* Sins are forgiven, and *he* reconciled to the Favour of GOD; and in conſequence hereof, a cloſing with him, and cleaving to him, as *our Wiſdom, Righte-*

Righteouſneſs, *Sanctification*, *Redemption*, or in one Word, our *Salvation*.

II. What Salvation it is, which is through this Faith, is the ſecond Thing to be conſidered.

1. And firſt, Whatſoever elſe it imply, it is a Preſent Salvation. It is ſomething attainable, yea, actually attained on Earth, by thoſe who are Partakers of this Faith. For thus ſaith the Apoſtle to the Believers at *Epheſus*, and in them to the Believers of all Ages, not Ye ſhall be (tho' that alſo is true) but *ye* are *ſaved through Faith*.

2. *Ye are ſaved* (to comprize all in one Word) from Sin. This is the Salvation which is through Faith. This is that great Salvation foretold by the Angel, before GOD brought his firſt begotten into the World, *Thou ſhalt call his Name JESUS, for he ſhall ſave his People from their Sins*. And neither here, nor in other Parts of holy Writ, is there any Limitation or Reſtriction. All his People, or, as it is elſewhere expreſs'd, all that believe in him, he will ſave from all their Sins; from Original and Actual, Paſt and Preſent Sin, of the Fleſh and of the Spirit. Through Faith that is in him, they are ſaved both from the Guilt and from the Power of it.

3. Firſt from the Guilt of all Paſt Sin. For whereas *all the World is guilty before GOD*; inſomuch that ſhould he *be extreme to mark what is done amiſs, there is none that could abide it*: And whereas *by the Law is only the Knowledge of Sin*, but no Deliverance from it; ſo that *by fulfilling the Deeds of the Law, no Fleſh can be juſtified in his Sight: Now the Righteouſneſs of GOD, which is by Faith of JESUS CHRIST, is manifeſted unto all that believe*. Now *they are juſtified freely by*

his Grace, through the Redemption that is in JESUS CHRIST. Him GOD hath ſet forth to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood; To declare his Righteouſneſs for (or by) *the Remiſſion of the Sins that are paſt.* Now hath CHRIST *taken away the Curſe of the Law, being made a Curſe for us.* He hath *blotted out the Hand-writing that was againſt us, taking it out of the Way, nailing it to his Croſs. There is therefore no Condemnation now, to them which* believe *in CHRIST JESUS.*

4. And being ſaved from Guilt, they are ſaved from Fear. Not indeed from a filial Fear of offending; but from all ſervile Fear, from that *Fear which hath Torment*, from Fear of Puniſhment, from Fear of the Wrath of GOD; whom they now no longer regard as a ſevere Maſter, but as an indulgent Father. *They have not received again the Spirit of Bondage; but the Spirit of Adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father: The Spirit itſelf alſo bearing Witneſs with their Spirits, that they are the Children of GOD.* They are alſo ſaved from the Fear, tho' not from the Poſſibility, of falling away from the Grace of GOD, and coming ſhort of the great and precious Promiſes: They are *ſealed with the Holy Spirit of Promiſe, which is the Earneſt of their Inheritance.* (Eph. i. 13.) Thus have they *Peace with GOD through our Lord JESUS CHRIST. They rejoice in Hope of the Glory of GOD. And the Love of GOD is ſhed abroad in their Hearts, through the Holy Ghoſt, which is given unto them.* And hereby they are *perſuaded* (tho' perhaps not all at all Times, nor with the ſame Fulneſs of Perſuaſion) that *neither Death nor Life, nor Things preſent, nor Things to come, nor Heighth nor Depth, nor any other Creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate them from*

the

the Love of GOD, which is in CHRIST JESUS our Lord.

5. Again, through this Faith they are ſaved from the Power of Sin, as well as from the Guilt of it. So the Apoſtle declares, *Ye know that he was manifeſted to take away our Sins, and in him is no Sin. Whoſoever abideth in him ſinneth not.* (Chap. iii. 5, &c.) Again, *Little Children, let no Man deceive you. --- He that committeth Sin is of the Devil.— Whoſoever believeth is born of GOD. And whoſoever is born of GOD doth not commit Sin, for his Seed remaineth in him: And he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of GOD.* Once more, *We know that whatſoever is born of GOD ſinneth not: But he that is begotten of GOD, keepeth himſelf, and that wicked one toucheth him not,* Chap. v. 18.

6. He that is by Faith born of GOD, ſinneth not, 1. By any habitual Sin: For all habitual Sin, is Sin reigning. But Sin cannot reign in any that believeth. Nor, 2. By any wilful Sin, for his Will, while he abideth in the Faith, is utterly ſet againſt all Sin, and abhorreth it as deadly Poiſon. Nor, 3. By any ſinful Deſire; for he continually deſireth the Holy and Perfect Will of GOD; and any Tendency to an Unholy Deſire, he by the Grace of GOD ſtifleth in the Birth. Nor, 4. Doth he ſin by Infirmities, whether in Act, Word or Thought. For his Infirmities have no Concurrence of his Will; and without This they are not properly Sins. Thus, *He that is born of GOD doth not commit Sin.* And tho' he cannot ſay, *He hath not ſinned,* yet now, *he ſinneth not.*

7. This then is the Salvation which is through Faith, even in the preſent World: A Salvation from Sin, and the Conſequences of Sin, both often expreſs'd in the Word *Juſtification*; which, taken

in the largeſt Senſe, implies, A Deliverance from Guilt and Puniſhment, by the Atonement of CHRIST actually applied to the Soul of the Sinner now believing on him, and a Deliverance from the whole Body of Sin through CHRIST *formed in his Heart.* So that he who is thus juſtified or ſaved by Faith, is indeed *born again.* He is *born again of the Spirit* unto a new *Life, which is hid with Chriſt in GOD. He is a new Creature: Old Things are paſt away: All Things in him are become New.* And as a *new-born Babe he gladly receives the* ἄδολον, *ſincere Milk of the Word, and grows thereby: Going on in the Might of the Lord his GOD, from Faith to Faith, from Grace to Grace, until at length he come unto a perfect Man, unto the Meaſure of the Stature of the Fulneſs of Chriſt.*

III. The firſt uſual Objection to this is,

1. That to preach Salvation or Juſtification by Faith only, is to preach againſt Holineſs and Good Works. To which a ſhort Anſwer might be given: It would be ſo, if we ſpake, as ſome do, of a Faith which was ſeparate from theſe. But we ſpeak of a Faith which is not ſo, but neceſſarily productive of all Good Works and all Holineſs.

2. But it may be of Uſe to conſider it more at large: Eſpecially ſince it is no new Objection, but as old as St. *Paul's* Time; for even then it was aſked, *Do we not make void the Law through Faith?* We anſwer, firſt, All who preach not Faith, do manifeſtly make void the Law; either directly and groſly by Limitations and Comments, that eat out all the Spirit of the Text: Or indirectly, by not pointing out the only Means whereby it is poſſible to perform it. Whereas, ſecondly, *We eſtabliſh*

the

the Law; both by ſhewing its full Extent, and Spiritual Meaning: And by calling all to that living Way, whereby *the Righteouſneſs of the Law may be fulfilled in them.* Theſe, while they truſt in the Blood of CHRIST alone, uſe all the Ordinances which he hath appointed, do all the *Good Works which he had before prepared that they ſhould walk therein*, and enjoy and manifeſt all holy and heavenly Tempers, even the ſame *Mind that was in CHRIST JESUS.*

3. But does not preaching this Faith lead Men into Pride? We anſwer, Accidentally it may. Therefore ought every Believer to be earneſtly cautioned, (in the Words of the great Apoſtle) *Becauſe of Unbelief, the firſt Branches were broken off; and thou ſtandeſt by Faith. Be not high-minded, but fear. If GOD ſpared not the natural Branches, take heed leſt he ſpare not Thee. Behold, therefore the Goodneſs and Severity of GOD! On them which fell, Severity: But towards thee, Goodneſs: If thou continue in his Goodneſs; otherwiſe thou alſo ſhalt be cut off.* And while he continues therein, he will remember thoſe Words of St. *Paul*, foreſeeing and anſwering this very Objection, (*Rom.* iii. 27.) *Where is boaſting then? It is excluded. By what Law? Of Works? Nay; but by the Law of Faith.* If a Man were juſtified by his Works, he would have whereof to glory. But there is no glorying for him, *that worketh not, but believeth on him that juſtifieth the Ungodly*, (Rom. iv.) To the ſame Effect are the Words both preceeding and following the Text, (*Eph.* ii. 4, &c.) *GOD who is rich in Mercy, — even when we were dead in Sins, hath quicken'd us together with CHRIST* (*by Grace ye are ſaved*) *— that he might ſhew the exceeding Riches of his Grace, in his Kind-*

neſs towards us through CHRIST JESUS. For by Grace ye are ſaved through Faith. And that not of yourſelves. Of yourſelves cometh neither your Faith nor your Salvation. *It is the Gift of GOD*; the free, undeſerved Gift, the Faith thro' which ye are ſaved, as well as the Salvation, which he of his own good Pleaſure, his mere Favour, annexes thereto. That ye believe, is one Inſtance of his Grace; that believing ye are ſaved, another. *Not of Works, leſt any Man ſhould boaſt.* For all our Works, all our Righteouſneſs, which were before our Believing, merited nothing of GOD but Condemnation. So far were they from deſerving Faith; which therefore, whenever given, is not *of Works.* Neither is Salvation of the Works we do when we believe. For *it is* then *GOD that worketh in us.* And therefore, that he giveth us a Reward for what he himſelf worketh, only commendeth the Riches of his Mercy, but leaveth us nothing whereof to glory.

4. However, may not the ſpeaking thus of the Mercy of GOD, as ſaving or juſtifying freely by Faith only, encourage Men in Sin? Indeed it may and will; many *will continue in Sin that Grace may abound.* But their Blood is upon their own Head. The Goodneſs of GOD ought to lead them to Repentance; and ſo it will thoſe who are ſincere of Heart. When they know there is yet Forgiveneſs with him, they will cry aloud that he would blot out their Sins alſo, thro' Faith which is in JESUS. And if they earneſtly cry, and faint not, if they ſeek him in all the Means he hath appointed, if they refuſe to be comforted till he come, *he will come and will not tarry.* And he can do much Work in a ſhort Time. Many are the Examples in the Acts of the Apoſtles, of

GOD's

GOD's ſhedding abroad this Faith in Men's Hearts, even like Lightning falling from Heaven. So in the ſame Hour that *Paul* and *Silas* began to preach, the Jailor *repented, believed, and was baptized:* As were three Thouſand by St. *Peter* on the Day of Pentecoſt, who all repented and believed at his firſt Preaching. And bleſſed be GOD, there are now many living Proofs, that he is ſtill *mighty to ſave.*

5. Yet to the ſame Truth, placed in another View, a quite contrary Objection is made: "If a "Man cannot be ſaved by all that he can do, "this will drive Men to Deſpair." True, to deſpair of being ſaved by their own Works, their own Merits or Righteouſneſs. And ſo it ought; for none can truſt in the Merits of CHRIST, till he has utterly renounced his own. He that *goeth about to eſtabliſh his own Righteouſneſs*, cannot receive the Righteouſneſs of GOD. The Righteouſneſs which is of Faith cannot be given him, while he truſteth in that which is of the Law.

6. But this, it is ſaid, is an uncomfortable Doctrine. The Devil ſpoke like himſelf, that is, without either Truth or Shame, when he dared to ſuggeſt to Men that it is ſuch. 'Tis the only comfortable one, 'tis *very full of Comfort*, to all ſelf-deſtroy'd, ſelf-condemn'd Sinners. That *whoſoever believeth on him ſhall not be aſhamed:* That *the ſame Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him:* Here is Comfort, high as Heaven, ſtronger than Death! What! Mercy for all? For *Zaccheus*, a Publick Robber? For *Mary Magdalen*, a Common Harlot? Methinks I hear one ſay, Then I, even I, may hope for Mercy! And ſo thou may'ſt, thou afflicted one, whom none

none hath comforted! GOD will not caſt out thy Prayer. Nay, perhaps he may ſay the next Hour, *Be of good cheer, thy Sins are forgiven thee*; ſo forgiven that they ſhall reign over thee no more; yea, and that *the Holy Spirit ſhall bear witneſs with thy Spirit that thou art a Child of GOD.* O glad Tidings! Tidings of great Joy, which are ſent unto all People. *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the Waters: Come ye and buy, without Money, and without Price.* Whatſoever your Sins be, *though red, like Crimſon,* though *more than the Hairs of your Head: Return ye unto the Lord, and he will have Mercy upon you; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

7. When no more Objections occur, then we are ſimply told, That Salvation by Faith only, ought not to be preached as the firſt Doctrine, or at leaſt not to be preached to All. But what ſaith the Holy Ghoſt? *Other Foundation can no Man lay, than that which is laid, even JESUS CHRIST.* So then, *That whoſoever believeth on him ſhall be ſaved,* is and muſt be the Foundation of all our Preaching; that is, muſt be preached firſt. "Well, but not to all." To whom then are we not to preach it? Whom ſhall we except? The Poor? Nay, they have a peculiar Right to have the Goſpel preached unto them. The Unlearned? No. GOD hath revealed theſe Things unto unlearned and ignorant Men from the Beginning. The Young? By no means. *Suffer theſe* in any wiſe, *to come unto* CHRIST, *and forbid them not.* The Sinners? Leaſt of all. *He came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance.* Why then, if any, we are to except the Rich, the Learned, the Reputable, the Moral Men. And

'tis

'tis true, they too often except themſelves from hearing; yet we muſt ſpeak the Words of our Lord. For thus the Tenor of our Commiſſion runs, *Go and preach the Goſpel to every Creature.* If any Man wreſt it or any Part of it to his Deſtruction, he muſt bear his own Burden. But ſtill, *as the Lord liveth, whatſoever the Lord ſaith unto us, That we will ſpeak.*

8. At this Time more eſpecially will we ſpeak, That *by Grace ye are ſaved through Faith:* Becauſe never was the maintaining this Doctrine more ſeaſonable than it is at this Day. Nothing but this can effectually prevent the Increaſe of the *Romiſh* Deluſion among us. 'Tis endleſs to attack one by one, all the Errors of that Church. But Salvation by Faith ſtrikes at the Root, and all fall at once where this is eſtabliſhed. It was this Doctrine (which our Church juſtly calls *the ſtrong Rock and Foundation of the Chriſtian Religion*) that firſt drove Popery out of theſe Kingdoms, and 'tis this alone can keep it out. Nothing but this can give a Check to that Immorality, which hath *overſpread the Land as a Flood.* Can you empty the great Deep, Drop by Drop? Then you may reform us, by Diſſuaſives from particular Vices. But let the *Righteouſneſs which is of GOD by Faith* be brought in, and ſo ſhall its proud Waves be ſtayed. Nothing but this can ſtop the Mouths of thoſe who *glory in their Shame, and openly deny the Lord that bought them.* They can talk as ſublimely of the Law, as he that hath it written by GOD in his Heart. To hear them ſpeak on this Head, might incline one to think, they were not far from the Kingdom of GOD. But take them out of the Law into the Goſpel; begin with the Righteouſneſs of Faith, *with*

CHRIST, the End of the Law to every one that believeth: And thoſe who but now appeared almoſt, if not altogether Chriſtians, ſtand confeſs'd the Sons of Perdition; as far from Life and Salvation (GOD be merciful unto them!) as the Depth of Hell from the Heighth of Heaven.

9. For this Reaſon the Adverſary ſo rages, whenever *Salvation by Faith* is declared to the World. For this Reaſon did he ſtir up Earth and Hell, to deſtroy thoſe who firſt preached it. And for the ſame Reaſon, knowing that Faith alone could overturn the Foundations of his Kingdom, did he call forth all his Forces, and employ all his Arts of Lies and Calumny, to affright that Champion of the Lord of Hoſts *Martin Luther*, from reviving it. Nor can we wonder thereat; for as that Man of GOD obſerves, *How would it enrage a proud ſtrong Man armed, to be ſtopt and ſet at naught by a little Child, coming againſt him with a Reed in his Hand?* Eſpecially, when he knew that little Child would ſurely overthrow him, and tread him under Foot. *Even ſo, Lord JESU!* Thus hath thy Strength been ever *made perfect in Weakneſs!* Go forth then, thou little Child, that believeſt in him, and *his Right-hand ſhall teach thee terrible Things!* Tho' thou art helpleſs and weak as an Infant of Days, the ſtrong Man ſhall not be able to ſtand before thee. Thou ſhalt prevail over him, and ſubdue him, and overthrow him, and trample him under thy Feet. Thou ſhalt march on under the great Captain of thy Salvation, *conquering and to conquer*, until all thine Enemies are deſtroyed, and *Death is ſwallowed up in Victory.*

Now

Now Thanks be to GOD which giveth us the Victory through our Lord JESUS CHRIST, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, be Bleſſing and Glory, and Wiſdom, and Thankſgiving, and Honour, and Power, and Might, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

THE
ALMOST CHRISTIAN.

A

SERMON

PREACHED AT

St. *MARY*'s *OXFORD*,

BEFORE THE

UNIVERSITY,

On JULY 25, 1741.

ACTS xxvi. 28.

Almoſt thou perſuadeſt me *to be a Chriſtian.*

AND many there are who go *thus far:* Ever ſince the Chriſtian Religion was in the World, there have been many in every Age and Nation, who were *almoſt perſuaded to be Chriſtians.* But ſeeing it avails nothing before GOD, to go *only thus far*, it highly imports us to conſider,

Firſt, What is implied in being *almoſt*,
Secondly, What, in being *altogether a Chriſtian.*

I.) 1. Now, in the being *almoſt a Chriſtian* is implied, firſt Heathen Honeſty. No one, I ſuppoſe, will make any Queſtion of this; eſpecially, ſince by Heathen Honeſty here, I mean, not that which is recommended in the Writings of their Philoſophers only, but ſuch as the common Heathens expected of one another, and many of them actually practiſed. By the Rules of this they were taught, that they ought not to be unjuſt; not to take away their Neighbour's Goods, either by Robbery or Theft: Not to oppreſs the Poor, neither to uſe Extortion toward any: Not to cheat or over-reach either the Poor or Rich, in whatſoever Commerce they had with them:

To

To defraud no Man of his Right, and, if it were poſſible, to owe no Man any thing.

2. Again, the common Heathens allowed, that ſome Regard was to be paid to Truth as well as to Juſtice. And accordingly, they not only held him in Abomination, who was forſworn, who called GOD to witneſs to a Lie; but him alſo, who was known to be a Slanderer of his Neighbour, who falſly accuſed any Man. And indeed little better did they eſteem wilful Liars of any ſort, accounting them the Diſgrace of Human Kind, and the Peſts of Society.

3. Yet again, there was a Sort of Love and Aſſiſtance, which they expected one from another. They expected whatever Aſſiſtance any one could give another, without Prejudice to himſelf. And this they extended, not only to thoſe little Offices of Humanity, which are performed without any Expence or Labour; but likewiſe, to the Feeding the Hungry, if they had Food to ſpare, the clothing the Naked, with their own ſuperfluous Raiment; and in general, the giving to any that needed, ſuch Things as they needed not themſelves. Thus far (in the loweſt Account of it) Heathen Honeſty went, the firſt Thing implied in the being *almoſt a Chriſtian*.

II.) 4. A ſecond Thing implied in the being *almoſt a Chriſtian*, is the having a Form of Godlineſs, of that Godlineſs which is preſcribed in the Goſpel of CHRIST: The having the *Outſide of a real Chriſtian*. Accordingly, the *Almoſt Chriſtian* does nothing which the Goſpel forbids. He taketh not the Name of GOD in vain: He bleſſeth and curſeth not; he ſweareth not at all, but his Communication is yea, yea; nay, nay. He profanes not the Day of the LORD, nor ſuffers it

to

to be profaned, even by the Stranger that is within his Gates. He not only avoids all actual Adultery, Fornication, and Uncleanneſs, but every Word or Look, that either directly or indirectly tends thereto: Nay, and all idle Words, abſtaining both from all Detraction, Backbiting, Tale-bearing, Evil-ſpeaking, and from *all fooliſh Talking and Jeſting*, εὐτραπελία, a kind of Virtue in the Heathen Moraliſt's Account. Briefly, from all Converſation that is not *good to the Uſe of edifying*, and that conſequently *grieves the Holy Spirit of GOD, whereby we are ſealed to the Day of Redemption.*

5. He abſtains from *Wine wherein is Exceſs*, from Revellings and Gluttony. He avoids, as much as in him lies, all Strife and Contention, continually endeavouring to live peaceably with all Men. And if he ſuffer wrong, he avengeth not himſelf, neither returns Evil for Evil. He is no Railer, no Brawler, no Scoffer, either at the Faults or Infirmities of his Neighbour. He does not willingly wrong, hurt, or grieve any Man; but in all Things acts and ſpeaks by that plain Rule, *Whatſoever thou wouldſt not he ſhould do unto thee, that do not thou to another.*

6. And in doing Good, he does not confine himſelf to cheap and eaſy Offices of Kindneſs, but labours and ſuffers for the Profit of many, that by all means he may help ſome. In ſpite of Toil or Pain, *Whatſoever his Hand findeth to do, he doeth it with all his Might:* Whether it be for his Friends, or for his Enemies; for the Evil, or for the Good. For, being *not ſlothful in this*, or in any *Buſineſs, as he hath Opportunity he doth Good*, all manner of Good *to all Men*; and to their Souls as well as their Bodies. He reproves the Wicked,

Wicked, inſtructs the Ignorant, confirms the Wavering, quickens the Good, and comforts the Afflicted. He labours to awaken thoſe that ſleep, to lead thoſe whom GOD hath already awakened, to the Fountain opened for Sin and for Uncleanneſs, that they may waſh therein and be clean; and to ſtir up thoſe who are ſaved through Faith, to adorn the Goſpel of CHRIST in all Things.

7. He that hath the Form of Godlineſs, uſes alſo the Means of Grace, yea, all of them, and at all Opportunities. He conſtantly frequents the Houſe of GOD; and that not as the Manner of ſome is, who come into the Preſence of the Moſt High, either loaded with Gold and coſtly Apparel, or in all the gaudy Vanity of Dreſs; and either by their unſeaſonable Civilities to each other, or the impertinent Gaiety of their Behaviour, diſclaim all Pretenſions to the Form, as well as to the Power of Godlineſs. Would to GOD there were none even among ourſelves who fall under the ſame Condemnation: Who come into his Houſe, it may be, gazing about, or with all the Signs of the moſt liſtleſs, careleſs Indifference, tho' ſometimes they may *ſeem* to uſe a Prayer to GOD for his Bleſſing on what they are entering upon; who, during that awful Service, are either aſleep or reclined in the moſt convenient Poſture for it; or, as tho' they ſuppoſed GOD was aſleep, talking with one another, or looking round, as utterly void of Employment. Neither let theſe be accuſed of the Form of Godlineſs. No; he who has even this, behaves with Seriouſneſs and Attention, in every Part of that ſolemn Service. More eſpecially when he approaches the Table of the Lord, it is not with a light or careleſs Behaviour, but with an Air, Geſture and Deportment which

which ſpeaks nothing elſe, but *God be merciful to me a Sinner.*

8. To this if we add, the conſtant Uſe of Family-Prayer, by thoſe who are Maſters of Families, and the ſetting Times apart for private Addreſſes to GOD, with a daily Seriouſneſs of Behaviour: He who uniformly practiſes this Outward Religion, has the Form of Godlineſs. There needs but One Thing more in order to his being *almoſt a Chriſtian*, and that is, Sincerity.

III.) 9. By Sincerity I mean, a real, inward Principle of Religion, from whence theſe outward Actions flow. And indeed, if we have not this, we have not Heathen Honeſty; no, not ſo much of it as will anſwer the Demand of a *Heathen, Epicurean Poet.* Even this poor Wretch, in his ſober Intervals, is able to teſtify,

* *Oderunt peccare boni, virtutis amore;*
Oderunt peccare mali, formidine pœnæ.

So that if a Man only abſtains from doing Evil, in order to avoid Puniſhment,

† *Non paſces in cruce corvos,*

ſaith the Pagan; there, *Thou haſt thy Reward.* But even he will not allow ſuch a harmleſs Man as this, to be ſo much as a *good Heathen.* If then any Man, from the ſame Motive, *viz.* to avoid Puniſhment, to avoid the Loſs of his Friends, or his Gain, or his Reputation, ſhould not only ab-

* Good Men avoid Sin from the Love of Virtue:
Wicked Men avoid Sin from a Fear of Puniſhment.

† Thou ſhalt not be hang'd.

ſtain from doing Evil, but alſo do ever ſo much Good, yea, and uſe all the Means of Grace; yet we could not with any Propriety ſay, This Man is even *almoſt a Chriſtian.* If he has no better Principle in his Heart, he is only a Hypocrite altogether.

10. Sincerity therefore is neceſſarily implied in the being *almoſt a Chriſtian:* A real Deſign to ſerve GOD, a hearty Deſire to do his Will: It is neceſſarily implied, that a Man have a ſincere View of pleaſing GOD in all Things: In all his Converſation; in all his Actions; in all he does, or leaves undone. This Deſign, if any Man be *almoſt a Chriſtian*, runs through the whole Tenor of his Life. This is the moving Principle both in his doing Good, his abſtaining from Evil, and his uſing the Ordinances of GOD.

11. But here it will probably be enquired, Is it poſſible that any Man living, ſhould go ſo far as this, and nevertheleſs be *only almoſt a Chriſtian?* What more than this can be implied, in the being *a Chriſtian altogether?* I anſwer, firſt, That it is poſſible to go thus far, and yet be but *almoſt a Chriſtian*; I learn not only from the Oracles of GOD, but alſo from the ſure Teſtimony of Experience.

12. Brethren, Great is *my Boldneſs towards you in this Behalf.* And *forgive me this Wrong*, if I declare my own Folly upon the Houſe-top, for yours and the Goſpel's Sake. Suffer me then to ſpeak freely of myſelf, even as of another Man. I am content to be abaſed, ſo ye may be exalted, and to be yet more vile, for the Glory of my LORD.

13. I did go thus far for many Years, as many of this Place can teſtify: Uſing Diligence to eſchew

all

all Evil, and to have a Conſcience void of Offence: Redeeming the Time, buying up every Opportunity of doing all Good to all Men; conſtantly and carefully uſing all the Publick and all the Private Means of Grace; endeavouring after a ſteddy Serioufneſs of Behaviour, at all Times and in all Places: And GOD is my Record, before whom I ſtand, doing all this in Sincerity; having a real Deſign to ſerve GOD, a hearty Deſire to do his Will in all Things, to pleaſe him who had called me to *fight the good Fight*, and to *lay hold of eternal Life*. Yet my own Conſcience beareth me Witneſs in the Holy Ghoſt, that all this Time I was but *almoſt a Chriſtian*.

II. If it be enquired, what more than this is implied in the being *altogether a Chriſtian?* I anſwer,

I.) 1. Firſt, The Love of GOD. For thus ſaith his Word, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy GOD, with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind, and with all thy Strength:* Such a Love of GOD is this, as engroſſes the whole Heart, as takes up all the Affections, as fills the entire Capacity of the Soul, and employs the utmoſt Extent of all its Faculties. He that thus loves the Lord his GOD, his Spirit continually *rejoiceth in GOD his Saviour*. His *Delight* is *in the Lord*, *his* Lord and his All, to whom *in every Thing he giveth Thanks*. *All* his *Deſire is unto GOD, and to the Remembrance of his Name*. His Heart is ever crying out, *Whom have I in Heaven but Thee, and there is none upon Earth that I deſire beſide Thee*. Indeed, what can he deſire beſide GOD? Not the World, or the Things of the World. For he is *crucified to the World, and the*

World crucified to him. He is crucified to the Deſire of the Fleſh, the Deſire of the Eye, and the Pride of Life. Yea, he is dead to Pride of every Kind: For *Love is not puffed up*; but he that dwelleth in Love, *dwelleth in God, and God in him*, is leſs than nothing in his own Eyes.

II.) 2. The Second Thing implied in the being *altogether a Chriſtian* is, The Love of our Neighbour. For thus ſaid our Lord in the following Words, *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thyſelf.* If any Man aſk who is my Neighbour, we reply, Every Man in the World; every Child of his, who is *the Father of the Spirits of all Fleſh.* Nor may we in any wiſe except our Enemies, or the Enemies of GOD and their own Souls. But every Chriſtian loveth theſe alſo as himſelf, yea, *as Chriſt loved us.* He that would more fully underſtand what Manner of Love this is, may conſider St. *Paul's* Deſcription of it. It is, *long-ſuffering and kind. It envieth not. It is not raſh or haſty in judging. It is not puffed up*, but maketh him that loves, the leaſt, the Servant of all. Love *doth not behave itſelf unſeemly*, but *becometh all Things to all Men.* She *ſeeketh not her own*, but only the Good of others, that they may be ſaved. Love *is not provoked.* It caſteth out Wrath, which he who hath, is not *made perfect in Love.* It *thinketh no Evil.* It *rejoiceth not in Iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth.* It *covereth all Things, believeth all Things, hopeth all Things, endureth all Things.*

III.) 3. There is yet one Thing more that may be ſeparately conſidered, tho' it cannot actually be ſeparate from the preceding, which is implied in the being *altogether a Chriſtian.* And that

that is the Ground of All, even Faith. Very excellent Things are ſpoken of this throughout the Oracles of GOD. *Every one*, ſaith the beloved Diſciple, *that believeth, is born of GOD. To as many as received him, gave he Power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name.* And, *this is the Victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith.* Yea, our Lord himſelf declares, *He that believeth in the Son hath everlaſting Life; and cometh not into Condemnation, but is paſſed from Death unto Life.*

4. But here let no Man deceive his own Soul. " * It is diligently to be noted, the Faith which bringeth not forth Repentance and Love, and all good Works, is not that right living Faith which is here ſpoken of, but a dead and deviliſh one. For even the Devils believe, That Chriſt was born of a Virgin, that he wrought all kind of Miracles, declaring himſelf very GOD: That for our Sakes he ſuffered a moſt painful Death, to redeem us from Death everlaſting: That he roſe again the third Day; that he aſcended into Heaven, and ſitteth at the Right Hand of the Father, and at the End of the World, ſhall come again to judge both the Quick and Dead. Theſe Articles of our Faith the Devils believe, and ſo they believe all that is written in the Old and New Teſtament. And yet for all this Faith, they be but Devils. They remain ſtill in their damnable Eſtate, lacking the very true Chriſtian Faith."

5. " The right and true Chriſtian Faith is (to go on in the Words of our own Church) not only to believe that holy Scripture, and the Articles of our Faith are true, but alſo to have a ſure

* Homily on the Salvation of Man.

Trust and Confidence, to be saved from everlasting Damnation by Christ. It is a sure Trust and Confidence which a Man hath in GOD, that by the Merits of Christ his Sins *are* forgiven, and he reconciled to the Favour of GOD,—whereof doth follow a loving Heart, to obey his Commandments."

6. Now, whosoever has this Faith, which *purifies the Heart*, by the Power of GOD, who *dwelleth therein*, from Pride, Anger, Desire, *from all Unrighteousness*, from *all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit*, which fills it with Love stronger than Death, both to GOD and to all Mankind; Love that doth the Works of GOD, glorying to spend and to be spent for all Men, and that endureth with Joy, not only the Reproach of Christ, the being mocked, despised, and hated of all Men, but whatsoever the Wisdom of GOD permits the Malice of Men or Devils to inflict; whosoever has this *Faith* thus *working by Love*, is not *almost only, but altogether a Christian.*

7. But who are the living Witnesses of these Things? I beseech you, Brethren, as in the Presence of that GOD, before whom *Hell and Destruction are without a Covering: How much more the Hearts of the Children of Men?* that each of you would ask his own Heart, "Am I of that Number? Do I so far practise Justice, Mercy and Truth, as even the Rules of Heathen Honesty require? If so, have I the very *Outside* of a Christian? The Form of Godliness? Do I abstain from Evil, from whatsoever is forbidden in the written Word of GOD? Do I, whatever Good my Hand findeth to do, do it with my Might? Do I seriously use all the Ordinances of GOD

GOD at all Opportunities? And is all this done, with a ſincere Deſign and Deſire to pleaſe GOD in all Things?

8. Are not many of you conſcious, that you never came thus far; That you have not been even *almoſt a Chriſtian?* That you have not come up to the Standard of Heathen Honeſty? At leaſt, not to the Form of Chriſtian Godlineſs? Much leſs hath GOD ſeen Sincerity in you, a real Deſign of pleaſing him in all Things. You never ſo much as intended, to devote all your Words and Works, your Buſineſs, Studies, Diverſions, to his Glory. You never even deſigned or deſired, that whatſoever you did, ſhould be *done in the Name of the Lord Jeſus*, and, as ſuch, ſhould be *a ſpiritual Sacrifice, acceptable to God through Chriſt.*

9. But ſuppoſing you had, Do good Deſigns and good Deſires make a Chriſtian? By no Means, unleſs they are brought to good Effect. "Hell is paved, ſaith one, with good Inten-"tions." The great Queſtion of all then ſtill remains. Is the Love of GOD ſhed abroad in your Heart? Can you cry out, "My GOD "and my All?" Do you deſire nothing but him? Are you happy in GOD? Is he your Glory, your Delight, your Crown of Rejoicing? And is this Commandment written in your Heart, That he who loveth GOD love his Brother alſo? Do you then love your Neighbour as yourſelf? Do you love every Man, even your Enemies, even the Enemies of GOD, as your own Soul? As Chriſt loved you? Yea, doſt thou believe that Chriſt loved *thee*, and gave himſelf for thee? Haſt thou Faith in his Blood? Believeſt thou the

Lamb of GOD hath taken away *thy* Sins, and caſt them as a Stone into the Depth of the Sea? That he hath blotted out the Hand-writing that was againſt *thee*, taking it out of the Way, nailing it to his Croſs? Haſt *thou* indeed Redemption through his Blood, even the Remiſſion of *thy* Sins? And doth his Spirit bear witneſs with *thy* Spirit, that thou art a Child of GOD?

10. The GOD and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who now ſtandeth in the Midſt of us, knoweth that if any Man die without this Faith and this Love, good it were for him that he had never been born. Awake, then, thou that ſleepeſt, and call upon thy GOD: Call in the Day when he may be found. Let him not reſt, till he *make his Goodneſs to paſs before thee, till he proclaim unto thee the Name of the Lord, The Lord, the Lord GOD, merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in Goodneſs and Truth; keeping Mercy for Thouſands, forgiving Iniquity and Tranſgreſſion and Sin.* Let no Man perſuade thee by vain Words, to reſt ſhort of this Prize of thy high Calling. But cry unto him Day and Night, who, *while we were without Strength, died for the Ungodly*, until thou knoweſt in whom thou haſt believed, and canſt ſay, "My LORD and my GOD." Remember, *always to pray and not to faint*, till thou alſo canſt lift up thy Hand unto Heaven, and declare to him that liveth for ever and ever, "Lord, Thou knoweſt all Things, Thou know-"eſt that I love Thee."

11. May we all thus experience what it is, to be not almoſt only, but altogether Chriſtians!

Being

Being juſtified freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in Jeſus: Knowing we have Peace with GOD through Jeſus Chriſt: Rejoicing in Hope of the Glory of GOD, and having the Love of GOD ſhed abroad in our Hearts, by the Holy Ghoſt given unto us!

A

SERMON

Preach'd on

SUNDAY, APRIL 4, 1742.

BEFORE THE

UNIVERSITY of *OXFORD*,

By *CHARLES WESLEY*, M. A.
Student of CHRIST-CHURCH.

EPHES. V. 14.

Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the Dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee Light.

IN diſcourſing on theſe Words, I ſhall, with the Help of GOD,

Firſt, Deſcribe the Sleepers to whom they are ſpoken.

Secondly, Enforce the Exhortation, *Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the Dead.* And,

Thirdly, Explain the Promiſe made to ſuch as do *awake* and *ariſe*; *Chriſt ſhall give thee Light.*

I.) 1. And firſt, as to the Sleepers here ſpoken to. By Sleep is ſignified the Natural State of Man: That deep Sleep of the Soul into which the Sin of *Adam* hath caſt all who ſpring from his Loins; that Supineneſs, Indolence, and Stupidity, that Inſenſibility of his real Condition, wherein every Man comes into the World, and continues till the Voice of GOD awakes him.

2. Now *they that ſleep, ſleep in the Night.* The State of Nature is a State of utter Darkneſs; a State wherein *Darkneſs covers the Earth, and groſs Darkneſs the People.* The poor unawakened Sinner, how much Knowledge ſoever he may have as to other Things, has no Know-

ledge

ledge of himself: In this Respect, *he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.* He knows not that he is a fallen Spirit, whose only Business in the present World, is to recover from his Fall, to regain that Image of GOD wherein he was created. He sees *no Necessity* for *the one Thing needful*, even that inward universal Change, that *Birth from above* (figured out by Baptism) which is the Beginning of that total Renovation, that Sanctification of Spirit, Soul and Body, *without which no Man shall see the Lord.*

3. Full of all Diseases as he is, he fancies himself in perfect Health: Fast bound in Misery and Iron, he dreams that he is happy, and at Liberty. He says, Peace, Peace, while the Devil, *as a strong Man armed*, is in full Possession of his Soul. He sleeps on still, and takes his Rest, tho' Hell is moved from beneath to meet him; tho' the Pit, from whence there is no Return, hath opened its Mouth to swallow him up: A Fire is kindled around him, yet he knoweth it not; yea it burns him, yet he lays it not to Heart.

4. By one who sleeps we are therefore to understand (and wou'd to GOD we might all understand it!) A Sinner satisfied in his Sins; contented to remain in his fallen State, to live and die without the Image of GOD: One who is ignorant both of his Disease, and of the only Remedy for it: One who never was warned, or never regarded the warning Voice of GOD *to flee from the Wrath to come:* One that never yet saw he was in Danger of Hell-fire, or cried out in the Earnestness of his Soul, *What must I do to be saved?*

5. If

5. If this Sleeper be not Outwardly Vicious, his Sleep is uſually the deepeſt of all: Whether he be of the *Laodicean* Spirit, *neither cold nor hot*; but a quiet, rational, inoffenſive, good-natured Profeſſor of the Religion of his Fathers; or whether he be Zealous and Orthodox, and *after the moſt ſtraiteſt Sect of our Religion, live a Phariſee*; that is, according to the Scriptural Account, one that *juſtifies himſelf*; one that labours *to eſtabliſh his own Righteouſneſs*, as the Ground of his Acceptance with GOD.

6. This is he, who *having a Form of Godlineſs, denies the Power thereof*; yea, and probably reviles it, whereſoever it is found, as mere Extravagance and Deluſion. Mean while, the wretched Self-deceiver thanks GOD, that he *is not as other Men are*; *Adulterers, Unjuſt, Extortioners*: No, he doth no Wrong to any Man. He *faſts twice in the Week*, uſes all the Means of Grace, is conſtant at Church and Sacrament: yea, and *gives Tythes of all that he has*, does all the Good that he can: *Touching the Righteouſneſs of the Law*, he is *blameleſs*: He wants nothing of Godlineſs but the Power; nothing of Religion, but the Spirit; nothing of Chriſtianity, but the Truth and the Life.

7. But know ye not, that however highly eſteemed among Men, *ſuch a Chriſtian* as this may be, he is an Abomination in the Sight of GOD, and an Heir of every Woe, which the Son of GOD Yeſterday, to Day, and for ever, denounces againſt *Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites?* He hath *made clean the Outſide of the Cup and the Platter*, but within is full of all Filthineſs. *An evil Diſeaſe cleaveth* ſtill *unto him*, ſo that *his inward Parts are very Wickedneſs*.

neſs. Our Lord fitly compares him to a *painted Sepulchre*, which *appears beautiful without*; but nevertheleſs is *full of dead Mens Bones, and of all Uncleanneſs.* The Bones indeed are no longer dry; *the Sinews and Fleſh are come upon them, and the Skin covers them above:* But *there is no Breath* in them, no Spirit of the living GOD. And *if any Man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his. Ye are Chriſt's, if ſo be that the Spirit of* GOD *dwell in you.* But if not, GOD knoweth that ye abide in Death, even until now.

8. This is another Character of the Sleeper here ſpoken to. He abides in Death, tho' he knows it not. He is dead unto GOD, *dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins.* For, *to be carnally minded is Death.* Even as it is written, *by one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin: And ſo Death paſſed upon all Men*, not only Temporal Death, but likewiſe Spiritual and Eternal. *In that Day that thou eateſt* (ſaid GOD to *Adam*) *Thou ſhalt ſurely die.* Not bodily (unleſs as he then became Mortal) but ſpiritually: Thou ſhalt loſe the Life of thy Soul: Thou ſhalt die to GOD; ſhalt be ſeparated from him, thy eſſential Life and Happineſs.

9. Thus firſt was diſſolved the Vital Union of our Soul with GOD: Inſomuch that *in the Midſt of* Natural *Life, we are* now *in* Spiritual *Death.* And herein we remain till the ſecond *Adam* becomes a quickening Spirit to us, till he raiſes the Dead, the Dead in Sin, in Pleaſure, Riches, or Honours. But before any dead Soul can live, he *hears* (hearkens to) *the Voice of the Son of* GOD: He is made ſenſible of his loſt Eſtate, and receives the Sentence of Death in himſelf.

ſelf. He knows himſelf to be *dead while he liveth*, dead to GOD, and all the Things of GOD: Having no more Power to perform the Actions of a living Chriſtian, than a dead Body to perform the Functions of a living Man.

10. And moſt certain it is, that one dead in Sin, has not *Senſes exerciſed to diſcern* ſpiritual *Good and Evil. Having Eyes, he ſees not, he hath Ears and hears not.* He doth not *taſte and ſee that the Lord is gracious.* He *hath not ſeen* GOD *at any Time*, nor *heard his Voice*, nor *handled the Word of Life.* In vain is the Name of JESUS *like Ointment poured forth*, and *all his Garments ſmell of Myrrh, Aloes and Caſſia.* The Soul that ſleepeth in Death hath no Perception of any Objects of this Kind. His Heart is *paſt feeling*, and underſtandeth none of theſe Things.

11. And hence having no Spiritual Senſes, no Inlets of Spiritual Knowledge, the Natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of GOD; nay, he is ſo far from receiving them, that whatſoever is ſpiritually diſcerned is mere Fooliſhneſs unto him. He is not content with being utterly ignorant of Spiritual Things, but he denies the very Exiſtence of them. And Spiritual Senſation itſelf is to Him, the Fooliſhneſs of Folly. *How*, ſaith he, *can theſe Things be?* How can any Man *know*, that he is alive to GOD? Even as you know, that your Body is now alive. Faith is the Life of the Soul: And if ye have this Life abiding in you, ye want no Marks to evidence it *to yourſelf*, but that ἔλεγχος πνεύματος, that divine Conſciouſneſs, that *Witneſs of* GOD, which is more and greater than ten thouſand Human Witneſſes.

12. If

12. If he doth not now bear Witneſs with thy Spirit, that thou art a Child of GOD, O that he might convince Thee, Thou poor unawakened Sinner, by his Demonſtration and Power, that Thou art a Child of the Devil! O that as I prophecy, there might now be *a Noiſe and a Shaking*, and may *the Bones come together, Bone to his Bone.* Then *come from the four Winds, O Breath, and breathe on theſe ſlain, that they may live!* And do not ye harden your Hearts, and reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt, who even now is come to *convince* you *of Sin, becauſe you believe not on the Name of the only begotten Son of* GOD.

II.) 1. Wherefore, *Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the Dead.* GOD calleth Thee now by my Mouth; and bids Thee know thyſelf, Thou fallen Spirit, thy true State and only Concern below. *What meaneſt Thou, O Sleeper? Ariſe! Call upon thy GOD, if ſo be thy GOD will think upon Thee, that thou periſh not.* A mighty Tempeſt is ſtirred up round about Thee, and thou art ſinking into the Depths of Perdition, the Gulf of GOD's Judgments. If thou wouldſt eſcape them, caſt thyſelf into them. *Judge thyſelf*, and Thou ſhalt *not be judged of the Lord.*

2. Awake, awake! Stand up this Moment, leſt Thou *drink at the Lord's Hand the Cup of his Fury.* Stir up thyſelf *to lay hold on the Lord, the Lord thy Righteouſneſs, mighty to ſave! Shake thyſelf from the Duſt.* At leaſt, let the Earthquake of GOD's Threatnings ſhake Thee. Awake and cry out with the trembling Gaoler, *What muſt I do to be ſaved?* And never reſt, till Thou believeſt on the Lord Jeſus, with a Faith

Faith which is his Gift, by the Operation of his Spirit.

3. If I ſpeak to any one of you more than to another, it is to Thee, who thinkeſt thyſelf unconcerned in this Exhortation. *I have a Meſſage from* GOD *unto Thee.* In his Name, I *warn* Thee *to flee from the Wrath to come.* Thou unholy Soul, ſee thy Picture in condemn'd *Peter*, lying in the dark Dungeon, between the Soldiers, bound with two Chains, the Keepers before the Door keeping the Priſon. The Night is far ſpent, the Morning is at hand, when thou art to be brought forth to Execution. And in theſe dreadful Circumſtances, Thou art faſt aſleep; Thou art faſt aſleep in the Devil's Arms, on the Brink of the Pit, in the Jaws of everlaſting Deſtruction.

4. O may *the Angel of the Lord come upon Thee*, and *the Light ſhine into thy Priſon!* And mayſt Thou feel the Stroke of an Almighty Hand, raiſing Thee with *Ariſe up quickly, gird thyſelf and bind on thy Sandals, caſt thy Garment about Thee, and follow me.*

5. Awake, Thou everlaſting Spirit, out of thy Dream of Worldly Happineſs. Did not GOD create Thee for Himſelf? Then, thou canſt not reſt, till thou reſteſt in Him. Return thou Wanderer. Fly back to thy Ark. *This is not thy Home.* Think not of building Tabernacles here. Thou art but *a Stranger, a Sojourner upon Earth:* A Creature of a Day, but juſt launching out into an Unchangeable State. Make haſte. Eternity is at hand. Eternity depends on this Moment. An Eternity of Happineſs, or an Eternity of Miſery!

6. In

6. In what State is thy Soul? Was GOD, while I am yet ſpeaking, to require it of Thee, art Thou ready to meet Death and Judgment? Canſt Thou ſtand in his Sight, *who is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity?* Art Thou *meet to be Partaker of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light?* Haſt Thou *fought a good Fight and kept the Faith?* Haſt Thou ſecured *the one Thing needful?* Haſt Thou recovered the Image of GOD, even *Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs?* Haſt Thou *put off the Old Man and put on the New?* Art Thou *cloathed upon with Chriſt?*

7. Haſt Thou Oil in thy Lamp? Grace in thy Heart? Doſt Thou *love the Lord thy GOD, with all thy Heart, and with all thy Mind, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength?* Is *that Mind in Thee, which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus?* Art Thou a Chriſtian indeed? That is, a new Creature? Are *old Things paſt away, and all Things become new?*

8. Art Thou *Partaker of the Divine Nature? Knoweſt Thou not, that Chriſt is in Thee, except Thou be reprobate?* Knoweſt Thou, that GOD *dwelleth in Thee, and Thou in GOD, by his Spirit which he hath given Thee?* Knoweſt Thou not, that *thy Body is a Temple of the Holy Ghoſt, which Thou haſt of* GOD? Haſt Thou the *Witneſs in thyſelf? The Earneſt of thine Inheritance?* Art Thou *ſealed by that Spirit of Promiſe, unto the Day of Redemption?* Haſt Thou *received the Holy Ghoſt* — or doſt thou ſtart at the Queſtion, not knowing whether there be any Holy Ghoſt?

9. If it offends Thee, be Thou aſſured, that Thou neither art a Chriſtian, nor deſireſt to be One. Nay, thy very *Prayer is turned into Sin;* and Thou haſt ſolemnly mocked GOD this very Day,

Day, by praying for *the Inſpiration of his Holy Spirit*, when Thou didſt not believe there was any ſuch Thing to be received.

10. Yet on the Authority of GOD's Word and our own Church, I muſt repeat the Queſtion, *Haſt Thou received the Holy Ghoſt?* If Thou haſt not, Thou art not yet a Chriſtian: For a Chriſtian is a Man, that is *anointed with the Holy Ghoſt, and with Power.* Thou art not yet made a Partaker of pure Religion and undefiled. Doſt Thou know, what Religion is? That it is, a Participation of the Divine Nature, the Life of GOD in the Soul of Man: *Chriſt formed in the Heart, Chriſt in Thee, the Hope of Glory.* Happineſs and Holineſs; Heaven begun upon Earth. *A Kingdom of GOD within Thee: Not Meat and Drink,* no outward Thing: *but Righteouſneſs and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt?* An everlaſting Kingdom brought into thy Soul, a *Peace of GOD, that paſſeth all Underſtanding*; a *Joy unſpeakable and full of Glory?*

11. Knoweſt Thou, that *in Jeſus Chriſt, neither Circumciſion availeth any Thing, nor Uncircumciſion*; *but Faith that worketh by Love*; but a New Creation? Seeſt Thou the Neceſſity of that Inward Change, that Spiritual Birth, that Life from the Dead? That Holineſs? And art Thou thoroughly convinced, that *without it, no Man ſhall ſee the Lord?* Art thou labouring after it? *Giving all Diligence, to make thy Calling and Election ſure? Working out thy Salvation with Fear and Trembling? Agonizing to enter in at the ſtreight Gate?* Art Thou *in earneſt* about thy Soul? And, canſt Thou tell the Searcher of Hearts, *Thou, O GOD, art the Thing that I long for!* Lord, Thou knoweſt all Things! Thou knoweſt that I *would* love Thee!

12. Thou

12. Thou hopeſt to be ſaved—but what Reaſon haſt Thou to give of the Hope that is in Thee? Is it becauſe Thou haſt done no Harm? Or, becauſe Thou haſt done much Good? Or, becauſe Thou art not like other Men; but Wiſe, or Learned, or Honeſt and morally Good? Eſteemed of Men, and of a fair Reputation? Alas, all this will never bring Thee to GOD. It is in his Account lighter than Vanity. Doſt Thou *know Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent?* Hath he taught Thee, that *by Grace we are ſaved through Faith? And that, not of ourſelves. It is the Gift of GOD: Not of Works, leſt any Man ſhould boaſt.* Haſt Thou received the faithful Saying as the whole Foundation of thy Hope, *that Jeſus Chriſt came into the World to ſave Sinners?* Haſt Thou learned what that meaneth, *I came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance? I am not ſent, but to the loſt Sheep?* Art Thou (He that heareth, let him underſtand!) Loſt, Dead? *Damned already?* — Doſt Thou know thy Deſerts? Doſt Thou feel thy Wants? Art Thou *poor in Spirit? Mourning* for GOD and refuſing to be comforted? Is the Prodigal *come to himſelf*, and well-content to be therefore thought *beſide himſelf*; by thoſe who are ſtill feeding upon the Huſks which he hath left? Art Thou willing to *live Godly in Chriſt Jeſus?* And doſt Thou therefore *ſuffer Perſecution?* Do *Men ſay all Manner of Evil againſt Thee falſely, for the Son of Man's Sake?*

13. O, that in all theſe Queſtions ye may hear the Voice that wakes the Dead, and feel that Hammer of the Word, which *breaketh the Rock in Pieces! — If ye will hear his Voice to Day, while it is called to Day, harden not your Hearts.*

Hearts. Now *awake thou that ſleepeſt* in Spiritual Death, that Thou ſleep not in Death Eternal! Feel thy loſt Eſtate, and *ariſe from the Dead.* Leave thine old Companions in Sin and Death. Follow Thou Jeſus, and *let the Dead bury their Dead. Save thyſelf from this untoward Generation. Come out from among them, and be Thou ſeparate, and touch not the unclean Thing, and the Lord ſhall receive Thee, Chriſt ſhall give Thee Light.*

III.) 1. This Promiſe I come, laſtly, to explain. And how encouraging a Conſideration is This, that whoſoever Thou art who obeyeſt his Call, Thou canſt not ſeek his Face in vain. If Thou even now *awakeſt and ariſeſt from the Dead,* he hath bound himſelf to *give Thee Light. The Lord ſhall give* Thee *Grace and Glory*; the Light of his Grace here, and the Light of his Glory, when Thou receiveſt the *Crown that fadeth not away.* Thy Light ſhall *break forth as the Morning,* and thy Darkneſs be as the Noon-day. *GOD who commanded the Light to ſhine out of Darkneſs,* ſhall *ſhine in thy Heart*; *to give the Knowledge of the Glory of GOD in the Face of Jeſus Chriſt. On them that fear the Lord ſhall the Sun of Righteouſneſs ariſe, with Healing in his Wings.* And *in that Day it ſhall be ſaid unto Thee, Ariſe, ſhine: for thy Light is come, and the Glory of the Lord is riſen upon Thee.* For Chriſt ſhall reveal himſelf in Thee. And he is the *true Light.*

2. GOD is Light, and will give himſelf to every awakened Sinner, that waiteth for him: And Thou ſhalt then be a Temple of the living GOD, and Chriſt ſhall *dwell in thy Heart by Faith*:

Faith: And *being rooted and grounded in Love, Thou ſhalt be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the Breadth, and Length, and Depth, and Heighth of that Love of Chriſt which paſſeth Knowledge, that Thou mayſt be filled with all the Fulneſs of GOD.*

3. Ye ſee your Calling, Brethren. We are call'd to be *an Habitation of GOD through his Spirit:* And through his Spirit dwelling in us, *to be Saints* here, and *Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.* So *exceeding great* are the *Promiſes which are given unto us*, actually given unto us who believe. For by Faith *we receive, not the Spirit of the World, but the Spirit which is of GOD*, the Sum of all the Promiſes, *that we may know the Things that are freely given to us of GOD.*

4. The Spirit of Chriſt is that great Gift of GOD, which at ſundry Times, and in divers Manners he hath promiſed to Man, and hath fully beſtowed ſince the Time that Chriſt was glorified. Thoſe Promiſes before made to the Fathers, he hath thus fulfilled: *I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my Statutes* *. *I will pour Water upon him that is thirſty, and Floods upon the dry Ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy Seed, and my Bleſſing upon thine Offspring* †.

5. Ye may all be living Witneſſes of theſe Things: Of Remiſſion of Sins, and the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt. *If Thou canſt believe, all Things are poſſible to him that believeth. Who among you is there, that feareth the Lord*, and yet *walketh on in Darkneſs, and hath no Light?* I aſk Thee in the Name of Jeſus, believeſt Thou that *his Arm is not*

* Ezek. xxxvi. 27. † Iſaiah xliv. 3.

not ſhortened at all? That he is ſtill *mighty to ſave?* That he is *the ſame Yeſterday, to Day, and for ever?* That he hath *now* Power, *on Earth* to forgive Sins? *Son, be of good Chear; thy Sins are forgiven.* GOD for Chriſt's Sake hath forgiven Thee. Receive this, *not as the Word of Man; but as it is, indeed, the Word of GOD*; and Thou art *juſtified freely through Faith.* Thou ſhalt be ſanctified alſo through Faith which is in Jeſus, and ſhalt ſet to thy Seal, even thine, that GOD *hath* given unto us *eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son.*

6. Men and Brethren, let me freely ſpeak unto you: And *ſuffer ye the Word of Exhortation,* even from one the leaſt eſteemed in the Church. Your Conſcience beareth you Witneſs in the Holy Ghoſt, that theſe Things are ſo, *if ſo be ye have taſted that the Lord is gracious. This is Eternal Life, to know the only true GOD, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent.* This experimental Knowledge, and this alone, is true Chriſtianity. He is a Chriſtian, who hath received the Spirit of Chriſt. He is not a Chriſtian, who hath not received him. Neither is it poſſible to have received him and not know it. For *at that Day* * (when he cometh, ſaith our Lord) *ye ſhall know, that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.* This is that *Spirit of Truth, whom the World cannot receive, becauſe it ſeeth him not, neither knoweth him. But ye know him: For he dwelleth with you, and ſhall be in you.*

7. The World cannot receive him, but utterly reject the Promiſe of the Father, contradicting and blaſpheming. But every Spirit which confeſſeth not this, is not of GOD. Yea, *this*

* John xiv. 20.

is that Spirit of Antichriſt, whereof ye have heard, that it ſhould come into the World, and even now it is in the World. He is Antichriſt whoſoever denies the Inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt, or that the Indwelling Spirit of GOD is the common Privilege of all Believers, the Bleſſing of the Goſpel, the unſpeakable Gift, the Univerſal Promiſe, the Criterion of a real Chriſtian.

8. It nothing helps them to ſay, "We do "not deny the *Aſſiſtance* of GOD's Spirit; but "only this *Inſpiration*, this *receiving the Holy* "*Ghoſt*, and being *ſenſible* of it. It is only this "*feeling of the* Spirit, this being *moved* by the "Spirit, or *filled* with it, which we deny to have "any Place in Sound Religion." But in *only denying this*, you deny the whole Scriptures, the whole Truth and Promiſe and Teſtimony of GOD.

9. Our own excellent Church knows nothing of this deviliſh Diſtinction: But ſpeaks plainly of * *feeling the Spirit of Chriſt*; of being † *moved by the Holy Ghoſt*, and knowing and ‡ *feeling there is no other Name than that of Jeſus*, whereby we can receive Life and Salvation. She teaches us all to pray for the ‖ *Inſpiration of the Holy Spirit*, yea, that we may be *filled with the Holy Ghoſt* §. Nay, and every Preſbyter of hers, profeſſes to *receive the Holy Ghoſt by the Impoſition of Hands.* Therefore to deny any of theſe, is in Effect, to renounce the Church of *England*, as well as the whole Chriſtian Revelation.

10. But *the Wiſdom of GOD* was always *Fooliſhneſs with Men.* No Marvel then, that the great

* Art. 17. † Office of conſecrating Prieſts. ‡ Viſitation of the Sick. ‖ Collect before the Holy Communion. § Order of Confirmation.

great Myſtery of the Goſpel, ſhould be now alſo *hid from the Wiſe and Prudent*, as well as in the Days of Old; That it ſhould be almoſt univerſally denied, ridiculed and exploded as mere Frenzy: And that all who dare avow it ſtill, are branded with the Names of Madmen and Enthuſiaſts. This is *that falling away* which was to come: that general Apoſtacy, of all Orders and Degrees of Men, which we even now find to have overſpread the Earth. *Run to and fro in the Streets of Jeruſalem, and ſee if ye can find a Man*; a Man that loveth the Lord his GOD with all his Heart, and ſerveth him with all his Strength? How does our own Land mourn (that we look no farther) under the Overflowings of Ungodlineſs? What Villanies of every Kind are committed Day by Day; yea, too often with Impunity, by thoſe who ſin with a high Hand, and glory in their Shame? Who can reckon up the Oaths, Curſes, Profaneneſs, Blaſphemies, the Lying, Slandering, Evil-ſpeaking, the Sabbath-breaking, Gluttony, Drunkenneſs, Revenge, the Whoredoms, Adulteries, and various Uncleanneſs, the Frauds, Injuſtice, Oppreſſion, Extortion, which overſpread our Land as a Flood?

11. And even among thoſe who have kept themſelves pure from theſe groſſer Abominations; how much Anger and Pride, how much Sloth and Idleneſs, how much Softneſs and Effeminacy, how much Luxury and Self-Indulgence, how much Covetouſneſs and Ambition, how much Thirſt of Praiſe, how much Love of the World, how much Fear of Man is to be found? Mean while, how little of true Religion? For where is he that loveth either GOD or his Neighbour, as He hath

given us Commandment? On the one Hand are thoſe, who have not ſo much as the Form of Godlineſs: On the other thoſe who have the Form only; there ſtands the *Open*, there the *Painted* Sepulchre. So that in very Deed, whoſoever were earneſtly to behold any publick gathering together of the People, (I fear, thoſe in our Churches are not to be excepted) might eaſily perceive, *that the one Part were Sadducees, and the other Phariſees:* The one having almoſt as little Concern about Religion, as if there were *no Reſurrection, neither Angel nor Spirit*; and the other making it a mere lifeleſs Form, a dull Round of external Performances, without either true Faith, or the Love of GOD, or Joy in the Holy Ghoſt.

12. Would to GOD I could except us of this Place. *Brethren, my Heart's Deſire, and Prayer to GOD for you is, That ye may be ſaved* from this overflowing of Ungodlineſs, and that here may its proud Waves be ſtay'd! But is it ſo indeed? GOD knoweth, yea, and our own Conſcience, it is not. Ye have not kept yourſelves pure. Corrupt are we alſo and abominable; and few are there that underſtand any more, few that worſhip GOD in Spirit and in Truth. We too are *a Generation that ſet not our Hearts aright, and whoſe Spirit cleaveth not ſtedfaſtly unto GOD*: He hath appointed us indeed to be *the Salt of the Earth. But if the Salt have loſt its Savour, it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be caſt out, and to be trodden under Foot of Men.*

13. And *ſhall I not viſit for theſe Things, ſaith the Lord? Shall not my Soul be avenged on ſuch a Nation as this?* Yea, we know not how ſoon

ſoon he may ſay to the Sword, *Sword, go through this Land!* He hath given us long Space to repent. He lets us alone this Year alſo: But he warns and awakens us by Thunder. His Judgments are abroad in the Earth. And we have all Reaſon to expect that Heavieſt of All, even *that he ſhould come unto us quickly, and remove our Candleſtick out of its Place, except we repent and do the firſt Works:* Unleſs we return to the Principles of the Reformation, the Truth and Simplicity of the Goſpel. Perhaps we are now reſiſting the laſt Effort of Divine Grace to ſave us. Perhaps we have well nigh *filled up the Meaſure of our Iniquities*, by rejecting the Counſel of GOD againſt ourſelves, and caſting out his Meſſengers.

14. O GOD, *in the midſt of Wrath remember Mercy!* Be glorified in our Reformation, not in our Deſtruction. Let us *bear the Rod, and him that appointed it.* Now that *thy Judgments are abroad in the Earth*, let the *Inhabitants of the World learn Righteouſneſs.*

15. My Brethren, it is high Time for us, to awake out of Sleep; before the *great Trumpet of the Lord be blown*, and our Land become a Field of Blood. O may we ſpeedily ſee the Things that make for our Peace, before they are hid from our Eyes! *Turn Thou us, O good Lord, and let thine Anger ceaſe from us. O Lord, look down from Heaven, behold and viſit this Vine*; and cauſe us to know the Time of our Viſitation. *Help us, O GOD of our Salvation, for the Glory of thy Name; O deliver us, and be merciful to our Sins, for thy Names Sake. And ſo will we not go back from thee: O let us live, and we ſhall call upon*

thy Name. Turn us again, O Lord God of Hoſts, ſhew the Light of thy Countenance, and we ſhall be whole.

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can aſk or think, according to the Power that worketh in us, unto him be Glory in the Church by Chriſt Jeſus throughout all Ages, World without End. Amen.

Scriptural Chriſtianity.

A

SERMON

PREACHED AT

St. *MARY*'s *OXFORD*,

BEFORE THE

UNIVERSITY,

AUGUST 24, 1744.

Whoſoever heareth the Sound of the Trumpet, and taketh not Warning, if the Sword come and take him away, his Blood ſhall be upon his own Head. Ezek. xxxiii. 4.

ACTS iv. 31.

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt.

1. THE ſame Expreſſion occurs in the ſecond Chapter, where we read, *When the Day of Pentecoſt was fully come, they were all* (the Apoſtles, with the Women, and the Mother of Jeſus, and his Brethren) *with one Accord in one Place. And ſuddenly there came a Sound from Heaven, as of a ruſhing mighty Wind. And there appeared unto them cloven Tongues, like as of Fire, and it ſat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt* §. One immediate Effect whereof was, *They began to ſpeak with other Tongues* †; inſomuch that both the *Parthians*, *Medes*, *Elamites*, and the other Strangers who *came together*, *when this was noiſed abroad*, *heard them ſpeak*, *in* their ſeveral *Tongues*, *the wonderful Works of God* ‡.

2. In this Chapter we read, that when the Apoſtles and Brethren had been praying, and praiſing God, *the Place was ſhaken where they were aſſembled together*, *and they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt* ‖. Not that we find any viſible Appearance here, ſuch as had been in the former Inſtance: Nor are we informed that the *extraordinary Gifts* of the Holy Ghoſt, were then given

§ Acts ii. 1, 2, 3, 4. † Ver. 4. ‡ Ver. 6. ‖ Acts iv. 31.

to all or any of them; ſuch as *the Gifts of Healing, of working other Miracles, of Prophecy, of diſcerning Spirits*; the ſpeaking with *divers kinds of Tongues, and the Interpretation of Tongues* §.

3. Whether theſe Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt were deſigned to remain in the Church throughout all Ages; and whether or no they will be reſtored at the nearer Approach of the *Reſtitution of all Things*, are Queſtions which it is not needful to decide. But it is needful to obſerve this, That even in the Infancy of the Church, God divided them with a ſparing Hand. *Were all* even then *Prophets?* Were *all Workers of Miracles? Had all the Gifts of Healing? Did all ſpeak with Tongues?* No, in no wiſe. Perhaps not one in a Thouſand. Probably none but the Teachers in the Church, and only ſome of them ‡. It was therefore for a more excellent Purpoſe than this, that *they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt.*

4. It was, to give them (what none can deny to be eſſential to all Chriſtians in all Ages) *the Mind which was in Chriſt*, thoſe holy *Fruits of the Spirit*, which whoſoever hath not, *is none of His:* To fill them with † *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-ſuffering, Gentleneſs, Goodneſs:* To endue them with *Faith*, (perhaps it might be rendered, *Fidelity*) with *Meekneſs and Temperance:* To enable them to *crucify the Fleſh with its Affections and Luſts*, its Paſſions and Deſires; and, in conſequence of that *inward Change*, to fulfil all *outward* Righteouſneſs, *to walk as Chriſt alſo walked, in the* ‡ *Work of Faith, the Patience of Hope, the Labour of Love.*

5. With-

§ 1 Cor. xii. 9, 10. ‡ 1 Cor. xii. 28, 29, 30. † Gal. v. 22, 23, 24. ‡ 1 Theſſ. i. 3.

5. Without buſying ourſelves then in curious, needleſs Enquiries, touching thoſe *extraordinary* Gifts of the Spirit, let us take a nearer View of theſe his *ordinary* Fruits; which we are aſſured will remain throughout all Ages: Of that great Work of God among the Children of Men, which we are uſed to expreſs by one Word, *Chriſtianity*: Not as it implies a Set of Opinions, a Syſtem of Doctrines, but as it refers to Mens Hearts and Lives. And this *Chriſtianity* it may be uſeful to conſider under three diſtinct Views.

I. As beginning to exiſt in Individuals.
II. As ſpreading from one to another.
III. As covering the Earth.

I deſign to cloſe theſe Conſiderations with a plain practical Application.

I. And firſt, let us conſider Chriſtianity in its Riſe, as beginning to exiſt in Individuals.

Suppoſe then one of thoſe who heard the Apoſtle *Peter* preaching *Repentance and Remiſſion of Sins*, was *pricked to the Heart*, was convinced of Sin, repented, and then *believed in Jeſus*. By this *Faith of the Operation of God*, which was the very *Subſtance* or Subſiſtence *of Things hoped for* §, the demonſtrative *Evidence of inviſible Things*, he inſtantly *received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby he* now *cried Abba, Father!* † Now firſt it was that he could *call Jeſus Lord, by the Holy Ghoſt* ‡, *the Spirit itſelf bearing Witneſs with his Spirit that he was a Child of God* ‖. Now it was that he could truly ſay, *I live not, but Chriſt liveth in me*; *and*

§ Heb. xi. 1. † Rom. viii. 15. ‡ 1 Cor. xii. 3. ‖ Rom. viii. 15.

and the Life which I now live in the Flesh, I live by Faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me *.

2. This then was the very Essence of his Faith, a divine ἔλεγχος † of the Love of God the Father, through the Son of his Love, to him a Sinner, now *accepted in the Beloved.* And ‡ *being justified by Faith, he had Peace with God,* yea *the Peace of God ruling in his Heart:* A Peace, which *passing all Understanding,* (πάντα νοῦν, all barely rational Conception) *kept his Heart and Mind* from all Doubt and Fear, through the *Knowledge of him in whom he had believed.* He could not therefore *be afraid of any evil Tidings; for his Heart stood fast believing in the Lord.* He feared not what Man could do unto him, knowing *the very Hairs of his Head were all numbered.* He feared not all the Powers of Darkness, whom God was daily *bruising under his Feet.* Least of all was he afraid to die; nay, he *desired to depart and be with Christ* ‖; who § *through Death had destroyed him that had the Power of Death, even the Devil; and delivered them who through Fear of Death, were all their Lifetime,* till then, *subject to Bondage.*

3. *His Soul* therefore *magnified the Lord, and his Spirit rejoiced in God his Saviour. He rejoiced in him with Joy unspeakable, who had reconciled him to God, even the Father: In whom he had Redemption through his Blood, the Forgiveness of Sins.* He rejoiced in that *Witness of God's Spirit with his Spirit, that he was a Child of God:* And more abundantly, *in Hope of the Glory of God,* in Hope of the glorious Image of God, the full *Renewal of his Soul in Righteousness and true Holiness;* and

* Gal. ii. 20. † Evidence or Conviction. ‡ Rom. v. 1. ‖ Phil. i. 23. § Heb. ii. 15.

and in Hope of that *Crown of Glory*, that *Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.*

4. *The Love of God* was alſo *ſhed abroad in his Heart, by the Holy Ghoſt which was given unto him* *. *Becauſe he was a Son, God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into his Heart, crying, Abba, Father* † ! And that filial Love of God was continually increaſed by the *Witneſs he had in himſelf* ‡, of God's pardoning Love to him, by *beholding what Manner of Love it was, which the Father had beſtowed upon him, that he ſhould be called a Child of God* ‖. So that God was the Deſire of his Eyes, and the Joy of his Heart; his Portion in Time and in Eternity.

5. He that thus *loved God*, could not but *love his Brother alſo*; and *not in Word only, but in Deed and in Truth.* "*If God*, ſaid he, *ſo loved us, we ought alſo to love one another* §." Yea, every Soul of Man, as the *Mercy* of God *is over all his Works* ††. Agreeably hereto, the Affection of this Lover of God, embraced all Mankind for his Sake; not excepting thoſe whom he had never ſeen in the Fleſh, or thoſe of whom he knew nothing more than that they were *the Offspring of God*; for whoſe Souls his Son had died; not excepting the *Evil* and *Unthankful*, and leaſt of all his Enemies, thoſe who *hated, or perſecuted, or deſpitefully uſed* him for his Maſter's ſake. Theſe had a peculiar Place both in his Heart and his Prayers. He loved them *even as Chriſt loved us.*

6. And *Love is not puffed up* *‖. It abaſes to the Duſt every Soul wherein it dwells. Accordingly

* Rom. v. 5. † Gal. iv. 6. ‡ 1 John v. 10. ‖ 1 John iii. 1. § 1 John iv. 11. †† Pſal. cxlv. 9. *‖ 1 Cor. xiii. 4.

ingly he was *lowly of Heart*, little, mean, and vile in his own Eyes. He neither ſought nor received the *Praiſe of Men, but that which cometh of God only.* He was meek and long-ſuffering, gentle to all, and eaſy to be intreated. Faithfulneſs and Truth never forſook him; they were *bound about his Neck, and wrote on the Table of his Heart.* By the ſame Spirit he was enabled to be *temperate in all Things, refraining his Soul even as a weaned Child.* He was *crucified to the World, and the World crucified to him:* Superior to *the Deſire of the Fleſh, the Deſire of the Eye, and the Pride of Life.* By the ſame Almighty Love was he ſaved, both from Paſſion and Pride, from Luſt and Vanity, from Ambition and Covetouſneſs, and from every Temper which was not in Chriſt.

7. It may be eaſily believed, he who had this Love in his Heart, would *work no Evil to his Neighbour.* It was impoſſible for him, knowingly and deſignedly, to do Harm to any Man. He was at the greateſt diſtance from Cruelty and Wrong, from any unjuſt or unkind Action. With the ſame Care did he *ſet a Watch before his Mouth, and keep the Door of his Lips*; leſt he ſhould offend in Tongue, either againſt Juſtice, or againſt Mercy or Truth. He *put away all Lying*, Falſhood and Fraud; neither was *Guile found in his Mouth.* He *ſpake Evil of no Man*; nor did an unkind Word ever come out of his Lips.

8. And as he was deeply ſenſible of the Truth of that Word, *without me ye can do nothing*, and conſequently, of the Need he had to be *water'd* of God *every Moment*; ſo he *continued daily* in all the Ordinances of God, the ſtated Chanels of his Grace to Man. *In the Apoſtle's Doctrine* or Teaching, receiving that Food of the Soul with

all Readineſs of Heart, *in the breaking of Bread*, which he found to be *the Communion of the Body of Chriſt*, and *in the Prayers* and Praiſes offered up by the great Congregation. And thus he daily *grew in Grace*, increaſing in Strength, in the Knowledge and Love of God.

9. But it did not ſatisfy him, barely to abſtain from doing Evil. His Soul was a-thirſt to do Good. The Language of his Heart continually was, *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.* My Lord *went about doing Good*; and ſhall not I *tread in his Steps? As* he *had Opportunity* therefore, if he could do no Good of a higher Kind, he fed the Hungry, clothed the Naked, helped the Fatherleſs or Stranger, viſited and aſſiſted them that were Sick or in Priſon. He *gave all his Goods to feed the Poor.* He rejoiced to labour or to ſuffer for them; and wherein ſoever he might profit another, there eſpecially to *deny himſelf.* He counted nothing too dear to part with for them, as well remembering the Word of his Lord, *Inſomuch as ye have done it unto one of the leaſt of theſe my Brethren, ye have done it unto me* §.

10. Such was *Chriſtianity* in its Riſe. Such was a Chriſtian in ancient Days. Such was every one of thoſe, who *when they heard* the Threatenings of *the Chief Prieſts and Elders, lift up their Voice to God with one Accord, and were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt. The Multitude of them that believed, were of one Heart and of one Soul.* (So did the Love of Him in whom they had believed, conſtrain them to love one another.) *Neither ſaid any of them that ought of the Things which he poſſeſſed was his own; but they had all Things common.* So fully were they crucified to the World, and the World

§ Matth. xxv. 40.

World crucified to them. *And they continued ſtedfaſtly with one Accord in the Apoſtles Doctrine, and in the Breaking of Bread, and in Prayer. And great Grace was upon them all; neither was there any among them that lacked: For as many as were Poſſeſſors of Lands or Houſes ſold them, and brought the Prices of the Things that were ſold, and laid them down at the Apoſtles Feet; and Diſtribution was made unto every Man, according as he had need* ‖.

II. 1. Let us take a View, in the ſecond Place, of this *Chriſtianity*, as ſpreading from one to another, and ſo gradually making its Way into the World. For ſuch was the Will of God concerning it, who *did not light a Candle to put it under a Buſhel, but that it might give Light to all that were in the Houſe.* And this our Lord had declared to his firſt Diſciples, *Ye are the Salt of the Earth, the Light of the World*; at the ſame Time that he gave that general Command, *Let your Light ſo ſhine before Men, that they may ſee your good Works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven* †.

2. And, indeed, ſuppoſing a few of theſe Lovers of Mankind, to ſee *the whole World lying in Wickedneſs*, Can we believe they would be unconcerned at the Sight, at the Miſery of thoſe for whom their Lord died? Would not their Bowels yearn over them, and their Hearts *melt away for very Trouble?* Could they then ſtand idle all the Day long, even were there no Command from him whom they loved? Rather would they not labour, by all poſſible Means, to *pluck* ſome of *theſe Brands out of the Burning?* Undoubtedly they would;

‖ Acts iv. 31 —— 35. † Matth. v. 13, 14, 15, 16.

would: They would ſpare no Pains to bring back whomſoever they could of thoſe poor *Sheep that had gone aſtray, to the great Shepherd and Biſhop of their Souls* §.

3. So the Chriſtians of old did. They laboured, having Opportunity, † *to do good unto all Men*, warning them to *flee from the Wrath to come*, now, now, to eſcape *the Damnation of Hell.* They declared, ‡ *The Times of Ignorance God winked at; but now he calleth all Men every where to repent.* They cried aloud, *Turn ye, turn ye from your Evil Ways; ſo Iniquity ſhall not be your Ruin* §. They ‖ *reaſoned* with them *of Temperance and Righteouſneſs*, or Juſtice, of the Virtues oppoſite to their reigning Sins, and *of Judgment to come*, of the Wrath of GOD which would ſurely be executed on evil Doers in that Day when he ſhould judge the World.

4. They endeavoured herein to ſpeak to every Man ſeverally as he had need. To the Careleſs, to thoſe who lay unconcerned in Darkneſs and in the Shadow of Death, they thundered, *Awake thou that ſleepeſt; ariſe from the Dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee Light:* But to thoſe who were already awakened out of Sleep, and groaning under a Senſe of the Wrath of GOD, their Language was, *We have an Advocate with the Father; he is the Propitiation for our Sins.* Mean Time thoſe who had believed, they *provoked to Love and to good Works; to patient Continuance in Well-doing; and to abound more and more* in that *Holineſs, without which no Man can ſee the Lord* ‖‖.

5. And

§ 1 Pet. ii. 25. † Gal. vi. 10. ‡ Acts xvii. 30.
‖ Ezek. xviii. 30. ‖ Acts xxiv. 25. ‖‖ Heb. xii. 14.

5. And their Labour was not in vain in the Lord. His *Word ran and was glorified.* It *grew mightily and prevailed.* But ſo much the more did Offences prevail alſo. The World in general were offended, *becauſe thay teſtified of it, that the Works thereof were evil* ††. The Men of Pleaſure were offended, not only becauſe theſe Men were *made*, as it were, *to reprove their Thoughts. (He profeſſeth*, ſaid they, *to have the Knowledge of God: He calleth himſelf the Child of the Lord: His Life is not like other Mens; his Ways are of another Faſhion: He abſtaineth from our Ways, as from Filthineſs: He maketh his Boaſt, that God is his Father* ‖.) But much more, becauſe ſo many of their Companions were taken away, and would no more *run with them to the ſame Exceſs of Riot* ‡. The Men of Reputation were offended, becauſe, as the Goſpel ſpread, they declined in the Eſteem of the People; and becauſe many no longer dared to *give them flattering Titles*, or to pay Man the Homage due to God only. The Men of Trade called one another together, and ſaid, ‡ *Sirs, ye know that by this Craft we have our Wealth. But ye ſee and hear that theſe Men have perſuaded and turned away much People. So that this our Craft is in Danger to be ſet at nought.* Above all, the Men of Religion, ſo called, the Men of *Outſide* Religion, "the Saints of the World," were offended and ready at every Opportunity to cry out, § *Men of Iſrael, Help! We have found theſe Men! Peſtilent Fellows, Movers of Sedition throughout*

†† John vii. 7. ‖ Wiſd. i. 13, 14, 15, 16. ‡ 1 Pet. iv. 4. ‡ Acts xix. 25, &c. § Acts xxiv. 5.

throughout the World. ‖ *These are the Men that teach all Men, every where, against the People, and against the Law.*

6. Thus it was that the Heavens grew black with Clouds, and the Storm gathered amain. For the more Christianity spread, *the more Hurt was done*, in the Account of those who received it not, and the Number increased of those who were more and more enraged at these ‖‖ *Men who* thus *turned the World upside down*; insomuch that they more and more cried out, *Away with such Fellows from the Earth; it is not fit that they should live*, yea, and sincerely believed, that *whosoever* should *kill them, would do God Service.*

7. Mean while they did not fail to †† *cast out their Name as evil:* So that this ‡‡ *Sect was every where spoken against.* §§ *Men said all manner of Evil of them*, even as had been done of the *Prophets that were before them.* And whatsoever any would affirm, others would believe. So that Offences grew as the Stars of Heaven for Multitude. And hence arose, at the Time foreordain'd of the Father, Persecution in all its Forms. Some, for a Season, suffered only Shame and Reproach; some, *the Spoiling of their Goods*; some *had Trial of Mocking and Scourging*, some *of Bonds and Imprisonment*; and others *resisted unto Blood* ‡.

8. Now it was that the Pillars of Hell were shaken, and the Kingdom of God spread more and more. Sinners were every where *turned from Dark-*

‖ Acts xxi. 28. ‖‖ Acts xvii. 6. †† Luke vi. 22.
‡‡ Acts xxviii. 22. §§ Matth. v. 11. ‡ Heb. x. 34.—xi. 37, &c.

Darkneſs to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God. He gave his Children *ſuch a Mouth, and ſuch Wiſdom, as all their Adverſaries could not reſiſt.* And their Lives were of equal Force with their Words. But, above all, their Sufferings ſpake to all the World. They *approved themſelves* the Servants of God, *in Afflictions, in Neceſſities; in Diſtreſſes; in Stripes, in Impriſonments, in Tumults, in Labours; in Perils in the Sea, in Perils in the Wilderneſs; in Wearineſs and Painfulneſs, in Hunger and Thirſt, in Cold and Nakedneſs* †. And when having *fought the good Fight*, they were *led as Sheep to the Slaughter, and offered up on the Sacrifice and Service of their Faith*, then the Blood of each found a Voice, and the Heathen owned, *He being dead, yet ſpeaketh.*

9. Thus did *Chriſtianity* ſpread itſelf in the Earth. But how ſoon did the Tares appear with the Wheat? And the *Myſtery of Iniquity* work as well as the *Myſtery of Godlineſs!* How ſoon did Satan find a Seat, even *in the Temple of God!* Till *the Woman fled in the Wilderneſs, and the Faithful were* again *miniſhed from the Children of Men.* Here we tread a beaten Path: The ſtill increaſing Corruptions of the ſucceeding Generations, have been largely deſcribed from Time to Time, by thoſe Witneſſes God raiſed up, to ſhew that he had *built his Church upon a Rock, and the Gates of Hell ſhould not* wholly *prevail againſt her* ‡.

III. 1. But ſhall we not ſee greater Things than theſe? Yea, greater than have been yet from the Beginning of the World. Can Satan cauſe

† 2 Cor. vi. 4, &c. ‡ Matth. xvi. 18.

cauſe the Truth of GOD to fail, or his Promiſes to be of none Effect? If not, the Time will come, when *Chriſtianity* will prevail over all, and cover the Earth. Let us ſtand a little, and ſurvey (the third Thing which was propoſed) this ſtrange Sight, a *Chriſtian World. Of this the Prophet of old enquired and ſearched diligently* *: Of this *the Spirit which was in them teſtified, It ſhall come to paſs in the laſt Days, that the Mountain of the Lord's Houſe ſhall be eſtabliſhed in the Top of the Mountains, and ſhall be exalted above the Hills, and all Nations ſhall flow unto it. And they ſhall beat their Swords into Plough-ſhares, and their Spears into Pruning-hooks. Nation ſhall not lift up Sword againſt Nation; neither ſhall they learn War any more* †. *In that Day there ſhall be a Root of* Jeſſe, *which ſhall ſtand for an Enſign of the People. To it ſhall the Gentiles ſeek, and his Reſt ſhall be glorious. And it ſhall come to paſs in that Day, that the Lord ſhall ſet his Hand again to recover the Remnant of his People; and he ſhall ſet up an Enſign for the Nations, and ſhall aſſemble the Outcaſts of* Iſrael, *and gather together the Diſperſed of* Judah, *from the four Corners of the Earth* ‡. *The Wolf ſhall then dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard ſhall lie down with the Kid: And the Calf and the young Lion and the Fatling together; and a little Child ſhall lead them. They ſhall not hurt nor deſtroy, ſaith the Lord, in all my Holy Mountain. For the Earth ſhall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea* §.

2. To

* 1 Pet. i. 10, 11, &c. † Iſa. ii. 2, 4. ‡ Iſa. xi. 10, 11, 12. § Iſa. xi. 6——9.

2. To the ſame Effect are the Words of the great Apoſtle, which it is evident have never yet been fulfilled. *Hath God caſt away his People? God forbid. But through their Fall Salvation is come to the Gentiles. And if the diminiſhing of them be the Riches of the Gentiles, how much more their Fulneſs? For I would not, Brethren, that ye ſhould be ignorant of this Myſtery, — That Blindneſs in Part is happened to* Iſrael, *until the Fulneſs of the Gentiles be come in: And ſo all* Iſrael *ſhall be ſaved* ‖.

3. Suppoſe now the Fulneſs of Time to be come, and the Propheſies to be accompliſhed, What a Proſpect is this? All is *Peace, Quietneſs, and Aſſurance for ever.* Here is no Din of Arms, no *confuſed Noiſe*, no *Garments rolled in Blood. Deſtructions are come to a perpetual End:* Wars are ceaſed from the Earth. Neither are there any inteſtine Jars remaining; no Brother riſing up againſt Brother; no Country or City divided againſt itſelf, and tearing out its own Bowels. Civil Diſcord is at an End for evermore, and none is left either to deſtroy or hurt his Neighbour. Here is no Oppreſſion to *make* even *the wiſe Man mad*; no Extortion to *grind the Face of the Poor*; no Robbery or Wrong; no Rapine or Injuſtice; for all are *content with ſuch Things as they poſſeſs.* Thus *Righteouſneſs and Peace have kiſſed each other* ‡; they have *taken Root and filled the Land:* Righteouſneſs flouriſhing out of the Earth, and *Peace looking down from Heaven.*

4. And

‖ Rom. xi. 1, 11, 12, 25, 26. ‖ Pſal. lxxxv. 10.

4. And with Righteouſneſs or Juſtice, Mercy is alſo found. The Earth is no longer *full of cruel Habitations. The Lord hath deſtroyed both the blood-thirſty* and malicious, the envious and revengeful Man. Were there any Provocation, there is none that now knoweth, to *return Evil for Evil:* But indeed there is none doth Evil, no not one; for all are *harmleſs as Doves.* And being *filled with Peace and Joy in Believing*, and united in one Body, by one Spirit, they all *love as Brethren*, they are all *of one Heart and of one Soul. Neither ſaith any of them, that ought of the Things which he poſſeſſeth is his own.* There is none among them that lacketh; for every Man loveth his Neighbour as himſelf. And all walk by one Rule, *Whatever ye would that Men ſhould do unto you, even ſo do unto them.*

5. It follows, that no unkind Word can ever be heard among them: No *Strife of Tongues*, no Contention of any kind, no Railing or Evil-ſpeaking; but every one *opens his Mouth with Wiſdom, and in his Tongue there is the Law of Kindneſs.* Equally incapable are they of Fraud or Guile: Their *Love* is *without Diſſimulation:* Their Words are always the juſt Expreſſion of their Thoughts, opening a Window into their Breaſt, that whoſoever deſires may look into their Hearts, and ſee that only Love and GOD are there.

6. Thus, where *the Lord Omnipotent taketh to himſelf his mighty Power and reigneth*, doth he *ſubdue all Things to himſelf*; cauſe every Heart to overflow with Love, and fill every Mouth with Praiſe. *Happy are the People that are in ſuch a Caſe; yea, bleſſed are the People who have*

have the Lord for their God §. *Ariſe, ſhine,* (ſaith the Lord) *for thy Light is come, and the Glory of the Lord is riſen upon thee. Thou haſt known that I the Lord am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer, the mighty God of* Jacob. *I have made thy Officers Peace, and thy Exacters Righteouſneſs. Violence ſhall no more be heard in thy Land, Waſting nor Deſtruction within thy Borders; but thou ſhalt call thy Walls Salvation, and thy Gates Praiſe. Thy People are all righteous; they ſhall inherit the Land for ever: The Branch of my planting, the Work of my Hands, that I may be glorified. The Sun ſhall no more be thy Light by Day; neither for Brightneſs ſhall the Moon give Light unto thee: But the Lord ſhall be unto thee an everlaſting Light, and thy God thy Glory* †.

IV. Having thus briefly conſidered *Chriſtianity*, as beginning, as going on, and as covering the Earth, it remains only that I ſhould cloſe the whole with a plain practical Application.

1. And firſt, I would aſk, Where does this *Chriſtianity* now exiſt? Where, I pray, do the *Chriſtians* live? Which is the Country, the Inhabitants whereof are *all* thus *filled with the Holy Ghoſt?* Are *all of one Heart and of one Soul?* Cannot ſuffer one among them *to lack any Thing*, but continually give *to every Man as he hath Need?* Who one and all have the Love of GOD filling their Hearts, and conſtraining them to love their Neighbour as themſelves? Who have all *put on Bowels of Mercy, Humbleneſs of Mind, Gentleneſs, Long-ſuffering?* Who offend not

§ Pſa. cxliv. 15. † Iſa. lx. 1, 16---19.

not in any Kind, either by Word or Deed, against Juſtice, Mercy, or Truth? But in every Point do unto all Men, as they would theſe ſhould do unto them. With what Propriety can we term any a *Chriſtian Country*, which does not anſwer this Deſcription? Why then, let us confeſs we have never yet ſeen a *Chriſtian Country* upon Earth.

2. I beſeech you, Brethren, by the Mercies of GOD, if ye do account me a Madman or a Fool, yet *as a Fool bear with me.* It is utterly needful that ſome one ſhould uſe great Plainneſs of Speech towards you. It is more eſpecially needful at *this* Time; for who knoweth but it is the *laſt?* Who knoweth how ſoon the Righteous Judge may ſay, *I will no more be intreated for this people. Tho'* Noah, Daniel, *and* Job, *were in this Land, they ſhould but deliver their own Souls.* And who will uſe this Plainneſs, if I do not? Therefore I, even I, will ſpeak. And I adjure you, by the Living GOD, that ye ſteel not your Breaſts againſt receiving a Bleſſing at *my* Hands. Do not ſay in your Heart, *Non perſuadebis, etiamſi perſuaſeris:* Or, in other Words, Lord, thou ſhalt not *ſend, by whom thou wilt ſend.* Let me rather periſh in my Blood, than be ſaved by this Man!

3. *Brethren, I am perſuaded better Things of you, tho' I thus ſpeak.* Let me aſk you then, in tender Love, and in the Spirit of Meekneſs, Is this City a *Chriſtian* City? Is *Chriſtianity, Scriptural Chriſtianity*, found here? Are we, conſidered as a Community of Men, ſo *filled with the Holy Ghoſt*, as to enjoy in our Hearts, and ſhew forth in our Lives, the genuine Fruits of that Spirit? Are all the Magiſtrates, all Heads and

Governors of Colleges and Halls, and their reſpective Societies, (not to ſpeak of the Inhabitants of the Town) *of one Heart and one Soul?* Is *the Love of GOD ſhed abroad in our Hearts?* Are our Tempers the ſame that were in him? And are our Lives agreeable thereto? Are we *Holy as he which hath called us is holy, in all manner of Converſation?*

4. I intreat you to obſerve, that here are no *peculiar Notions* now under Conſideration; that the Queſtion moved is not concerning *doubtful Opinions*, of one kind or another; but concerning the undoubted, fundamental Branches (if there be any ſuch) of our *common Chriſtianity*. And for the Deciſion thereof, I appeal to your own Conſcience, guided by the Word of God. He therefore that is not condemned by his own Heart, let him go free.

5. In the Fear then, and in the Preſence of the Great GOD, before whom both you and I ſhall ſhortly appear, I pray you that are in Authority over us, whom I reverence for your Office Sake, to conſider, (and not after the Manner of Diſſemblers with GOD) Are you *filled with the Holy Ghoſt?* Are ye lively Portraitures of Him, whom ye are appointed to repreſent among Men? *I have ſaid, Ye are Gods*, ye Magiſtrates and Rulers; ye are by Office ſo nearly allied to the GOD of Heaven! In your ſeveral Stations and Degrees, ye are to ſhew forth unto us *the Lord our Governor*. Are all the Thoughts of your Hearts, all your Tempers and Deſires, ſuitable to your High Calling? Are all your Words like unto thoſe which come out of the Mouth of GOD? Is there in all your Actions Dignity and Love? A greatneſs which Words cannot expreſs, which can flow only from an Heart full of

GOD—and yet consistent with the Character of *Man that is a Worm, and the Son of Man that is a Worm!*

6. Ye venerable Men, who are more especially called to form the tender Minds of Youth, to dispel thence the Shades of Ignorance and Error, and train them up to be wise unto Salvation, Are you *filled with the Holy Ghost?* With all those *Fruits of the Spirit*, which your important Office so indispensably requires? Is your Heart whole with God? Full of Love and Zeal to set up his Kingdom on Earth? Do you continually remind those under your Care, that the one rational End of all our Studies, is to know, love, and serve *the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent?* Do you inculcate upon them, Day by Day, that *Love* alone *never faileth?* (Whereas, *whether there be Tongues, they shall fail, or* Philosophical *Knowledge, it shall vanish away:*) And that without Love, all Learning is but splendid Ignorance, pompous Folly, Vexation of Spirit. Has all you teach an actual Tendency to the Love of God, and of all Mankind for his sake? Have you an Eye to this End in whatever you prescribe, touching the Kind, the Manner, and the Measure of their Studies; desiring and labouring, that wherever the Lot of these young Soldiers of Christ is cast, they may be so many *burning and shining Lights, adorning the Gospel of Christ* in all Things? And permit me to ask, Do you put forth all your Strength in the vast Work you have undertaken? Do you labour herein with all your Might? Exerting every Faculty of your Soul? Using every Talent which God hath lent you, and that to the uttermost of your Power?

7. Let it not be ſaid, that I ſpeak here, as if all under your Care were intended to be Clergymen. Not ſo: I only ſpeak as if they were all intended to be Chriſtians. But what Example is ſet them by us who enjoy the Beneficence of our Foreſathers; by Fellows, Students, Scholars; more eſpecially thoſe who are of ſome Rank and Eminence? Do ye, Brethren, abound in the Fruits of the Spirit, in Lowlineſs of Mind, in Self-denial and Mortification, in Seriouſneſs and Compoſure of Spirit, in Patience, Meekneſs, Sobriety, Temperance, and in unwearied, reſtleſs Endeavours, to do good, in every kind, unto all Men; to relieve their outward Wants, and to bring their Souls to the true Knowledge and Love of God? Is this the general Character of Fellows of Colleges? I fear it is not. Rather, Have not Pride and Haughtineſs of Spirit, Impatience and Peeviſhneſs, Sloth and Indolence, Gluttony and Senſuality, and even a proverbial Uſeleſſneſs, been objected to us, *perhaps* not always by our Enemies, *nor wholly* without Ground? O that God would roll away this Reproach from us, that the very Memory of it might periſh for ever!

8. Many of us are more immediately conſecrated to God, called to *miniſter in holy Things*. Are we then Patterns to the reſt, *in Word, in Converſation, in Charity; in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity* §? Is there written on our Forehead and on our Heart, *Holineſs to the Lord?* From what Motives did we enter upon this Office? Was it indeed with a ſingle Eye *to ſerve God, truſting that we were inwardly moved by the Holy Ghoſt, to take upon us this Miniſtration, for the promoting of his Glory, and the edifying of his People?* And *have* we *clearly determined, by God's Grace, to give our-*

§ 1 Tim. iv. 12,

ſelves

ſelves wholly to this Office? Do we forſake and ſe aſide, as much as in us lies, all worldly Cares and Studies? Do we apply ourſelves wholly to this one thing, and draw all our Cares and Studies this Way? Are we *apt to teach?* Are we *taught of God*, that we may be able to teach others alſo? Do we know God? Do we know Jeſus Chriſt? Hath God *revealed his Son in us?* And hath he *made us able Miniſters of the New Covenant?* Where then are *the Seals of our Apoſtleſhip?* Who *that were dead in Treſpaſſes and Sin*, have been quickened by our Word? Have we a burning Zeal to ſave Souls from Death, ſo that for their ſake we often forget even to eat our Bread? Do we ſpeak plain, *by Manifeſtation of the Truth, commending ourſelves to every Man's Conſcience in the Sight of God**? Are we dead to the World and the Things of the World, *laying up all our Treaſure in Heaven? Do we lord over God's Heritage?* Or are we the leaſt, *the Servants of all?* When we bear the Reproach of Chriſt, Does it ſit heavy upon us? Or do we rejoice therein? When we are *ſmitten on the one Cheek*, Do we reſent it? Are we impatient of Affronts? Or do we *turn the other alſo*; *not reſiſting the Evil*, but *overcoming Evil with Good?* Have we a bitter Zeal, inciting us to ſtrive ſharply and paſſionately with them *that are out of the Way?* Or is our Zeal the Flame of Love, ſo as to direct all our Words with Sweetneſs, Lowlineſs, and Meekneſs of Wiſdom?

9. Once more, What ſhall we ſay concerning the Youth of this Place? Have *you* either the Form or the Power of *Chriſtian* Godlineſs? Are

* 2 Cor. iv. 2.

you humble, teachable, adviſable; or ſtubborn, ſelf-willed, heady, and high-minded? Are you obedient to your Superiors as to Parents? Or do you deſpiſe thoſe to whom you owe the tendereſt Reverence? Are you diligent in your eaſy Buſineſs, purſuing your Studies with all your Strength? Do you *redeem the Time*, crowding as much Work into every Day as it can contain? Rather, are ye not conſcious to yourſelves, that you waſte away Day after Day, either in reading what has no Tendency to *Chriſtianity*, or in Gaming, or in — you know not what? Are you better Managers of your Fortune than of your Time? Do you, out of Principle, take Care to *owe no Man any thing?* Do you *remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy*; to ſpend it in the more immediate Worſhip of God? When you are in his Houſe, Do you conſider that God is there? Do you behave, *as ſeeing Him that is inviſible?* Do you know how to *poſſeſs your Bodies, in Sanctification and Honour?* Are not Drunkenneſs and Uncleanneſs found among you? Yea, Are there not of you, who *glory in their Shame?* Do not many of you *take the Name of God in vain*, perhaps habitually, without either Remorſe or Fear? Yea, Are there not a Multitude of you that are forſworn? I fear, a ſwiftly-increaſing Multitude. Be not ſurprized, Brethren. Before God and this Congregation, I own myſelf to have been of that Number; ſolemnly ſwearing to *obſerve all thoſe Cuſtoms*, which I then knew nothing of; *and thoſe Statutes*, which I did not ſo much as read over, either then, or for ſome Years after. What is Perjury, if this is not? But if it be, O what a Weight of Sin, yea, Sin of no common

Dye,

Dye, lieth upon us! And doth not *the Moſt High regard it?*

10. May it not be one of the Conſequences of this, that ſo many of you are a Generation of *Triflers*; Triflers with God, with one another, and with your own Souls? For how few of you ſpend, from one Week to another, a ſingle Hour in private Prayer? How few have any Thought of God in the general Tenor of your Converſation? Who of you is, in any Degree, acquainted with the Work of his Spirit, his ſupernatural Work in the Souls of Men? Can you bear, unleſs now and then, in a Church, any Talk of the Holy Ghoſt? Would you not take it for granted, if one began ſuch a Converſation, that it was either *Hypocriſy* or *Enthuſiaſm?* In the Name of the Lord God Almighty, I aſk, What Religion are *you* of? Even the Talk of *Chriſtianity* ye cannot, will not bear. O my Brethren! What a *Chriſtian* City is this? *It is Time for thee, Lord, to lay to thine Hand!*

11. For indeed, what Probability, what Poſſibility rather, (ſpeaking after the Manner of Men) is there that *Chriſtianity*, *Scriptural Chriſtianity*, ſhould be again the Religion of this Place? That all Orders of Men among us ſhould ſpeak and live as Men *filled with the Holy Ghoſt?* By whom ſhould this *Chriſtianity* be reſtored? By thoſe of you that are in Authority? Are you convinced then, that this is *Scriptural Chriſtianity?* Are you deſirous it ſhould be reſtored? And do ye not count your Fortune, Liberty, Life, dear unto yourſelves, ſo ye may be inſtrumental in the reſtoring it? But ſuppoſe ye have this Deſire, who hath any Power proportioned to the Effect? Perhaps ſome of you have made a few faint At-

e mpts, but with how ſmall Succeſs? Shall *Chriſtianity* then be reſtored by young, unknown, inconſiderable Men? I know not whether ye yourſelves could ſuffer it. Would not ſome of you cry out, "Young Man, in ſo doing thou reproacheſt us?" But there is no Danger of your being put to the Proof; ſo hath *Iniquity overſpread us like a Flood.* Whom then ſhall God ſend? The Famine, the Peſtilence, (the laſt Meſſengers of God to a guilty Land) or the Sword? *The Armies of the* Romiſh *Aliens*, to *reform* us into our firſt Love? Nay, *rather let us fall into thy Hand, O Lord, and let us not fall into the Hand of Man.*

Lord, ſave or we periſh? Take us out of the Mire that we ſink not! O help us againſt theſe Enemies, for vain is the Help of Man. Unto thee all things are poſſible. According to the Greatneſs of thy Power, preſerve thou thoſe that are appointed to die; and preſerve us in the Manner that ſeemeſt to thee good; not as we will, but as thou wilt.

JUSTIFICATION by FAITH.

A

SERMON

On ROMANS iv. 5.

ROMANS iv. 5.

To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that juſtifieth the Ungodly, his Faith is counted to him for Righteouſneſs.

1. HOW a Sinner may be juſtified before GOD, the Lord and Judge of all, is a Queſtion of no common Importance, to every Child of Man. It contains the Foundation of all our Hope; in as much as while we are at Enmity with GOD, there can be no true Peace, no ſolid Joy, either in Time or in Eternity. What Peace can there be, while our own Heart condemns us? And much more, He that *is greater than our Heart and knoweth all Things?* What ſolid Joy, either in this World or that to come, while *the Wrath of GOD abideth on us?*

2. And yet how little hath this important Queſtion been underſtood? What confuſed Notions have many had concerning it? Indeed not only confuſed, but often utterly falſe; contrary to the Truth, as Light to Darkneſs: Notions abſolutely inconſiſtent with the Oracles of GOD, and with the whole Analogy of Faith. And hence, erring concerning the very Foundation, they could not

poſſibly build thereon: At leaſt, not *Gold, Silver, or precious Stones*, which would endure when *tried* as *by Fire*; but only *Hay and Stubble*, neither acceptable to GOD, nor profitable to Man.

3. In order to do Juſtice, as far as in me lies, to the vaſt Importance of the Subject, to ſave thoſe that ſeek the Truth in Sincerity, from *vain Jangling and Strife of Words*, to clear the Confuſedneſs of Thought, into which ſo many have already been led thereby, and to give them true and juſt Conceptions of this great Myſtery of Godlineſs, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew,

Firſt, What is the general Ground of this whole Doctrine of Juſtification.

Secondly, What Juſtification is.

Thirdly, Who they are that are juſtified. And,

Fourthly, On what Terms they are juſtified.

I. I am, firſt, to ſhew, What is the general Ground of this whole Doctrine of Juſtification.

1. In the Image of GOD was Man made, holy as he that created him is holy; merciful as the Author of all is merciful, perfect as his Father in Heaven is perfect. As GOD is Love, ſo Man dwelling in Love, dwelt in GOD, and GOD in him. GOD made him to be *an Image of his own Eternity*, an incorruptible Picture of the GOD of Glory. He was accordingly pure, as GOD is pure, from every Spot of Sin. He knew not Evil in any Kind or Degree, but was inwardly and outwardly ſinleſs and undefiled. He

loved

loved the Lord his GOD with all his Heart, and with all his Mind and Soul and Strength.

2. To Man thus upright and perfect, GOD gave a perfect Law, to which he required full and perfect Obedience. He required full Obedience in every Point, and this to be performed without any Intermiſſion, from the Moment Man became a living Soul, till the Time of his Trial ſhould be ended. No Allowance was made for any falling ſhort. As indeed there was no need of any; Man being altogether equal to the Taſk aſſigned, and thoroughly furniſhed for every good Word and Work.

3. To the entire Law of Love which was written in his Heart (againſt which perhaps he could not ſin directly) it ſeemed good to the ſovereign Wiſdom of GOD, to ſuperadd one poſitive Law: *Thou ſhalt not eat of the Fruit of the Tree that groweth in the midſt of the Garden:* Annexing that Penalty thereto, *In the Day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.*

4. Such then was the State of Man in Paradiſe. By the free, unmerited Love of GOD, he was holy and happy; he knew, loved, enjoyed GOD, which is (in Subſtance) Life everlaſting. And in this Life of Love, he was to continue for ever, if he continued to obey GOD in all Things: But if he diſobeyed him in any, he was to forfeit all. *In that Day*, ſaid GOD, *thou ſhalt ſurely die.*

5. Man did diſobey GOD. He *eat of the Tree, of which God commanded him, ſaying, Thou ſhalt not eat of it.* And in that Day he was condemn'd, by the righteous Judgment of GOD. Then alſo the Sentence whereof he was

warned before, began to take place upon him. For the Moment he taſted that Fruit, he died: His Soul died, was ſeparated from GOD; ſeparate from whom the Soul has no more Life, than the Body has when ſeparate from the Soul. His Body likewiſe became corruptible and mortal; ſo that Death then took hold on this alſo. And being already dead in Spirit, dead to GOD, dead in Sin, he haſtened on to Death everlaſting; to the Deſtruction both of Body and Soul, in the Fire never to be quenched.

6. Thus *by one Man, Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin. And ſo Death paſſed upon all Men*, as being contained in him who was the common Father and Repreſentative of us all. Thus *through the Offence of one*, all are dead, dead to GOD, dead in Sin, dwelling in a corruptible, mortal Body, ſhortly to be diſſolved, and under the Sentence of Death eternal. For as *by one Man's Diſobedience, all were made Sinners*; ſo by that Offence of one, *Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation*, Rom. v. 12, *&c.*

7. In this State we were, even all Mankind, when *GOD ſo loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the End we might not periſh but have everlaſting Life.* In the Fulneſs of Time, he was made Man, another common Head of Mankind, a ſecond general Parent and Repreſentative of the whole human Race. And as ſuch it was that *he bore our Griefs*, the Lord *laying upon him the Iniquities of us all.* Then *was he wounded for our Tranſgreſſions and bruiſed for our Iniquities. He made his Soul an Offering for Sin:* He poured out his Blood for the Tranſgreſſors: He *bare our Sins in his own Body on the Tree,*

Tree, that *by his Stripes we* might be *healed*: And *by that one Oblation of himſelf once offered, he hath redeemed me and all Mankind*; having thereby *made a full, perfect and ſufficient Sacrifice and Satisfaction, for the Sins of the whole World.*

8. In Conſideration of this, that the Son of GOD hath *taſted Death for every Man*, GOD hath now *reconciled the World to himſelf, not imputing to them their former Treſpaſſes.* And thus, *as by the Offence of one, Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation, even ſo by the Righteouſneſs of one, the free Gift came upon all Men unto Juſtification.* So that for the Sake of his well-beloved Son, of what he hath done and ſuffered for us, GOD now vouchſafes on one only Condition (which himſelf alſo enables us to perform) both to remit the Puniſhment due to our Sins, to reinſtate us in his Favour, and to reſtore our dead Souls to ſpiritual Life, as the Earneſt of Life eternal.

9. This therefore is the general Ground, of the whole Doctrine of *Juſtification.* By the Sin of the firſt *Adam*, who was not only the Father, but likewiſe the Repreſentative of us all, we all *fell ſhort of the* Favour *of GOD*: we all became *Children of Wrath*: Or, as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, *Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation.* Even ſo, by the Sacrifice for Sin made by the ſecond *Adam*, as the Repreſentative of us all, GOD is ſo far reconciled to all the World, that he hath given them a New Covenant. The plain Condition whereof being once fulfilled, *there is no more Condemnation for us*, but we are *juſtified freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt.*

II.

II. 1. But what is it to be *juſtified?* What is *Juſtification?* This was the ſecond Thing which I propoſed to ſhew. And it is evident from what has been already obſerved, that it is not, the being made actually juſt and righteous. This is *Sanctification*; which is indeed, in ſome Degree, the immediate *Fruit* of Juſtification: But nevertheleſs is a diſtinct Gift of GOD, and of a totally different Nature. The one implies, what GOD *does for us* through his Son; the other what he *works in us* by his Spirit. So that altho' ſome rare Inſtances may be found, wherein the Term *Juſtified*, or *Juſtification*, is uſed in ſo wide a Senſe as to include *Sanctification* alſo; yet in general Uſe, they are ſufficiently diſtinguiſhed from each other, both by St. *Paul* and the other inſpired Writers.

II. Neither is that far-fetch'd Conceit, that Juſtification is, the clearing us from Accuſation, particularly that of *Satan*, eaſily proveable from any clear Text of holy Writ. In the whole ſcriptural Account of this Matter, as above laid down, neither that Accuſer nor his Accuſation appears to be at all taken in. It cannot indeed be denied, that he is the *Accuſer of Men*, emphatically ſo called. But it does in no wiſe appear, that the great Apoſtle hath any Reference to this, more or leſs, in all that he hath written touching Juſtification, either to the *Romans* or the *Galatians*.

3. It is alſo far eaſier to take for granted, than to prove from any clear Scripture-Teſtimony, that Juſtification is, the clearing us from the Accuſation brought againſt us by *the Law*. At leaſt,

if

if this forced, unnatural Way of ſpeaking, mean either more or leſs than this, That whereas we have tranſgreſſed the Law of GOD, and thereby deſerved the Damnation of Hell, GOD does not inflict on thoſe who are juſtified, the Puniſhment which they had deſerved.

4. Leaſt of all does Juſtification imply, that GOD is *deceived* in thoſe whom he *juſtifies*; that he thinks them to be what in fact they are not, that he accounts them to be otherwiſe than they are. It does by no means imply, that GOD judges concerning us, contrary to the real Nature of Things: that he eſteems us better than we really are, or believes us righteous, when we are unrighteous. Surely no. The Judgment of the all-wiſe GOD, is always according to Truth. Neither can it ever conſiſt with his unerring Wiſdom, to think that I am innocent, to judge that I am righteous or holy, becauſe another is ſo. He can no more in this Manner confound me with Chriſt, than with *David* or *Abraham*. Let any Man to whom GOD hath given Underſtanding, weigh this without Prejudice: and he cannot but perceive, that ſuch a Notion of Juſtification, is neither reconcileable to Reaſon or Scripture.

5. The plain ſcriptural Notion of Juſtification is Pardon, the Forgiveneſs of Sins. It is that Act of GOD the Father, whereby for the ſake of the Propitiation made by the Blood of his Son, he *ſheweth forth his Righteouſneſs* (or Mercy) *by the Remiſſion of the Sins that are paſt*. This is the eaſy, natural Account of it given by St. *Paul*, throughout this whole Epiſtle. So he explains it himſelf, more particularly in this, and in the following Chapter. Thus in the next Verſes

Verſes but one to the Text, *Bleſſed are they*, ſaith he, *whoſe Iniquities are forgiven, and whoſe Sins are covered: Bleſſed is the Man to whom the Lord will not impute Sin.* To him that is juſtified or forgiven, GOD *will not impute Sin* to his Condemnation. He will not condemn him on that account, either in this World or in that which is to come. His Sins, all his paſt Sins, in Thought, Word and Deed, *are covered*, are blotted out: ſhall not be remembered or mentioned againſt him, any more than if they had not been. GOD will not inflict on that Sinner what he deſerved to ſuffer, becauſe the Son of his Love hath ſuffered for him. And from the Time we are *accepted through the Beloved, reconciled to GOD through his Blood*, he loves and bleſſes and watches over us for Good, even as if we had never ſinned.

Indeed the Apoſtle in one Place ſeems to extend the Meaning of the Word much farther; where he ſays, *Not the Hearers of the Law, but the Doers of the Law ſhall be juſtified.* Here he appears to refer our Juſtification, to the Sentence of the great Day. And ſo our Lord himſelf unqueſtionably doth, when he ſays, *By thy Words thou ſhalt be juſtified:* proving thereby, that *for every idle Word Men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give an Account in the Day of Judgment.* But perhaps we can hardly produce another Inſtance, of St. *Paul's* uſing the Word in that diſtant Senſe. In the general Tenor of his Writings, it is evident he doth not. And leaſt of all in the Text before us, which undeniably ſpeaks, not of thoſe who have already *finiſhed their Courſe*, but of thoſe who are now juſt *ſetting out*, juſt *beginning to run the Race which is ſet before him.*

III.

III. 1. But this is the third Thing which was to be conſidered, namely, who are they that are juſtified? And the Apoſtle tells us expreſly, *the Ungodly:* He, that is, GOD, *juſtifieth the Ungodly:* The Ungodly of every Kind and Degree, and none but the Ungodly. As *they that are righteous, need no Repentance*, ſo they need no Forgiveneſs. It is only Sinners that have any Occaſion for Pardon: It is Sin alone which admits of being forgiven. Forgiveneſs therefore has an immediate Reference to Sin, and (in this Reſpect) to nothing elſe. It is our *Unrighteouſneſs* to which the pardoning GOD is *merciful:* It is our *Iniquity* which he *remembereth no more.*

2. This ſeems not to be at all conſidered by thoſe who ſo vehemently contend, that a Man muſt be ſanctified, that is, holy, before he can be juſtified: Eſpecially by ſuch of them as affirm, that univerſal Holineſs or Obedience muſt precede Juſtification (unleſs they mean, that Juſtification at the laſt Day, which is wholly out of the preſent Queſtion) ſo far from it, that the very Suppoſition, is not only flatly impoſſible (for where there is no Love of GOD, there is no Holineſs; and there is no Love of GOD, but from a Senſe of his loving us) but alſo groſly, intrinſically abſurd, contradictory to itſelf. For it is not a *Saint* but a *Sinner* that is *forgiven*, and under the Notion of a Sinner. GOD *juſtifieth* not the Godly, but the *Ungodly*; not thoſe that are holy already, but the Unholy. Upon what Condition he doth this, will be conſidered quickly: But whatever it is, it cannot be Holineſs. To aſſert this, is to ſay, the Lamb of GOD takes away,

away, only thoſe Sins which were taken away before.

3. Does then the good Shepherd ſeek and ſave only thoſe that are found already? No. He ſeeks and ſaves that which is loſt. He pardons thoſe who *need* his pardoning Mercy. He ſaves from the Guilt of Sin (and at the ſame time from the Power) Sinners of every Kind, of every Degree: Men who till then were altogether ungodly; in whom the Love of the Father was not; and conſequently, in whom dwelt no good Thing, no good or truly Chriſtian Temper: But all ſuch as were evil and abominable, Pride Anger, Love of the World, the genuine Fruits of that *carnal Mind, which is Enmity againſt GOD.*

4. Theſe *who are ſick, the Burden of whoſe Sins is intolerable*, are they that *need a Phyſician*; theſe who are guilty, who groan under the Wrath of GOD, are they that need a Pardon. Theſe who are *condemned already*, not only by GOD, but alſo by their own Conſcience, as by a thouſand Witneſſes, of all their Ungodlineſs, both in Thought and Word and Work, cry aloud for him that *juſtifieth the Ungodly, through the Redemption that is in Jeſus: The Ungodly and him that worketh not*; that worketh not before he is juſtified; any thing that is good, that is truly virtuous or holy, but only evil continually. For his Heart is neceſſarily, eſſentially evil, till the Love of GOD is ſhed abroad therein. And while the Tree is corrupt, ſo are the Fruits; *for an evil Tree cannot bring forth good Fruit.*

5. If it be objected, "Nay, but a Man, before he is juſtified, may feed the Hungry, or clothe the Naked; and theſe are good Works:"

The

The Anſwer is eaſy. He *may* do thoſe, even befor he is juſtified. And theſe are, in one Senſe, *Good Works*; they are *good and profitable to Men.* But it does not follow, that they are, ſtrictly ſpeaking, good in themſelves, or good in the Sight of GOD. All truly *good Works* (to uſe the Words of our Church) *follow after Juſtification.* And they are therefore good and *acceptable to GOD in Chriſt*, becauſe they *ſpring out of a true and living Faith.* By a Parity of Reaſon, all *Works done before Juſtification, are not* good, in the Chriſtian Senſe, *foraſmuch as they ſpring not of Faith in Jeſus Chriſt* (tho' from ſome kind of Faith in GOD they may ſpring) *yea rather, for that they are not done, as GOD hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not* (how ſtrange ſoever it may appear to ſome) *but they have the Nature of Sin.*

6. Perhaps thoſe who doubt of this, have not duly conſidered the weighty Reaſon which is here aſſign'd, why no Works done before Juſtification, can be truly and properly good. The Argument plainly runs thus:

No Works are good which are not done as GOD hath willed and commanded them to be done:

But no Works done before Juſtification are done as GOD hath willed and commanded them to be done:

Therefore no Works done before Juſtification are good.

The firſt Propoſition is ſelf-evident. And the ſecond, That no Works done before Juſtification, are done as GOD hath willed and commanded them to be done, will appear equally plain and undeniable,

undeniable, if we only consider GOD hath willed and commanded, that *all our Works* should *be done in Charity*, (ἐν ἀγαπῃ) in Love, in that Love to GOD, which produces Love to all Mankind. But none of our Works can be done in this Love, while the Love of the Father (of GOD as our Father) is not in us. And this Love cannot be in us, till we receive the *Spirit of Adoption, crying in our Hearts, Abba, Father.* If therefore GOD doth not *justify the Ungodly*, and him that (in this Sense) *worketh not*, then hath Christ died in vain; then notwithstanding his Death, can no Flesh living be justified.

IV. 1. But on what Terms then is he justified, who is altogether *ungodly*, and till that Time, *worketh not?* On one alone, which is Faith. He *believeth in him that justifieth the Ungodly.* And *he that believeth is not condemned:* Yea, he *is passed from Death unto Life.* For *the Righteousness* (or Mercy) *of GOD is by Faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe:— Whom GOD hath set forth for a Propitiation, through Faith in his Blood: that he might be just, and* (consistently with his Justice) *the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus: Therefore we conclude, that a Man is justified by Faith, without the Deeds of the Law:* without previous Obedience to the Moral Law, which indeed he could not till now perform. That it is the Moral Law, and that alone which is here intended, appears evidently from the Words that follow. *Do we then make void the Law through Faith? GOD forbid! Yea, we establish the Law.* What Law do we establish by Faith? Not the Ritual Law: Not

Not the Ceremonial Law of *Moſes*. In no wiſe; but the great unchangeable Law of Love, the holy Love of God and of our Neighbour.

2. Faith in general is, a divine, ſupernatural ἔλεγχος, *Evidence* or Conviction *of Things not ſeen*, not diſcoverable by our bodily Senſes, as being either paſt, future or ſpiritual. Juſtifying Faith implies, not only a Divine Evidence or Conviction, that *GOD was in Chriſt, reconciling the World unto himſelf*, but a ſure Truſt and Confidence, that Chriſt died for *my* Sins, that he loved *me* and gave himſelf for *me*. And at what Time ſoever a Sinner thus believes, be it in early Childhood, in the Strength of his Years, or when he is old and hoary-hair'd, GOD juſtifieth that ungodly one: GOD for the Sake of his Son pardoneth and abſolveth, him who had in him till then no good Thing. Repentance indeed GOD had given him before: But that Repentance was neither more nor leſs, than a deep Senſe of the Want of all Good, and the Preſence of all Evil. And whatever Good he hath or doth from that Hour, when he firſt believes in GOD through Chriſt, Faith does not *find* but *bring*. This is the Fruit of Faith. Firſt the Tree is good, and then the Fruit is good alſo.

3. I cannot deſcribe the Nature of this Faith better, than in the Words of our own Church. "The only Inſtrument of Salvation" (whereof Juſtification is one Branch) "is Faith: that is, a ſure Truſt and Confidence, that GOD both hath and will forgive our Sins, that he hath accepted us again into his Favour, for the Merits of Chriſt's Death and Paſſion.—But here we muſt take heed that we do not halt with GOD, through an inconſtant,

conſtant, wavering Faith. *Peter* coming to Chriſt upon the Water, becauſe he fainted in Faith, was in danger of drowning. So we, if we begin to waver or doubt, it is to be feared, that we ſhould ſink as *Peter* did, not into the Water, but into the bottomleſs Pit of Hell-fire." Second Sermon on the Paſſion.

" Therefore have a ſure and conſtant Faith, not only that the Death of Chriſt is available for all the World, but that he hath made a full and ſufficient Sacrifice for *thee*, a perfect cleanſing of *thy* Sins, ſo that thou mayſt ſay with the Apoſtle, He loved *thee* and gave himſelf for *thee*. For this is to make Chriſt *thine own*, and to apply his Merits unto *thyſelf*." Sermon on the Sacrament, firſt Part.

4. By affirming that this Faith is the Term or *Condition of Juſtification*, I mean, firſt, that there is no Juſtification without it. *He that believeth not is condemned already*; and ſo long as he believeth not, that Condemnation cannot be removed, but *the Wrath of GOD abideth on him*. As *there is no other Name given under Heaven than that of Jeſus of Nazareth*, no other Merit *whereby* a condemned Sinner can ever *be ſaved* from the Guilt of Sin; ſo there is no other Way of obtaining a Share in his Merit, than *by Faith in his Name*. So that as long as we are without this Faith, we are *Strangers to the Covenant of Promiſe*, we are *Aliens from the Common-wealth of Iſrael, and without GOD in the World*. Whatſoever Virtues (ſo call'd) a Man may have (I ſpeak of thoſe unto whom the Goſpel is preached; for *what have I to judge them that are without?*) whatſoever good Works (ſo accounted) he may

do,

do, it profiteth not; he is ſtill a *Child of Wrath*, ſtill under the Curſe, till he believes in Jeſus.

5. Faith therefore is the *neceſſary* Condition of Juſtification. Yea, and the *only neceſſary* Condition thereof. This is the ſecond Point carefully to be obſerved; that the very Moment GOD giveth Faith (*for it is the Gift of GOD*) to the *Ungodly*, *that worketh not*, that *Faith is counted to him for Righteouſneſs*. He hath no Righteouſneſs at all, antecedent to this, not ſo much as negative Righteouſneſs or Innocence. But *Faith is imputed to him for Righteouſneſs*, the very Moment that he believeth. Not that GOD (as was obſerved before) thinketh him to be, what he is not. But as *he made Chriſt to be Sin for us*, that is, treated him as a Sinner, puniſhed him for our Sins, ſo he counteth us righteous, from the Time we believe in him: that is, he doth not puniſh us for our Sins, yea, treats us as tho' we were guiltleſs and righteous.

6. Surely the Difficulty of aſſenting to this Propoſition, That Faith is the *only Condition* of Juſtification, muſt ariſe from not underſtanding it. We mean thereby thus much, That it is the only Thing without which none is juſtified; the only Thing that is immediately, indiſpenſably, abſolutely requiſite in order to Pardon. As on the one hand, tho' a Man ſhould have every thing elſe, without Faith, yet he cannot be juſtified; ſo on the other, tho' he be ſuppoſed to want every thing elſe, yet if he hath Faith, he cannot but be juſtified. For ſuppoſe a Sinner of any Kind or De-

 gree,

gree, in a full Senſe of his total Ungodlineſs, of his utter Inability to think, ſpeak or do Good, and his abſolute Meetneſs for Hell-fire: Suppoſe, I ſay, this Sinner, helpleſs and hopeleſs, caſts himſelf wholly on the Mercy of GOD in Chriſt (which indeed he cannot do but by the Grace of GOD) who can doubt, but he is forgiven in that Moment? Who will affirm, that any more is *indiſpenſably required*, before that Sinner can be juſtified?

Now if there ever was one ſuch Inſtance from the beginning of the World (And have there not been, and are there not ten thouſand times ten thouſand?) it plainly follows, that Faith is, in the above Senſe, the ſole Condition of Juſtification.

7. It does not become poor, guilty, ſinful Worms, who receive whatſoever Bleſſings they enjoy, (from the leaſt Drop of Water that cools our Tongue, to the immenſe Riches of Glory in Eternity) of Grace, of mere Favour, and not of Debt, to aſk of GOD the Reaſons of his Conduct. It is not meet for us to call him in queſtion, *who giveth Account to None of his Ways*; to demand, Why didſt thou make Faith the Condition, the only Condition of Juſtification? Wherefore didſt thou decree, *He that believeth*, and he only, *ſhall be ſaved?* This is the very Point on which St. *Paul* ſo ſtrongly inſiſts in the Ninth Chapter of this Epiſtle, *viz.* That the Terms of Pardon and Acceptance muſt depend, not on us, but *on him that calleth us:* that there is no *Unrighteouſneſs with GOD*, in fixing his own

own Terms, not according to ours, but his own good Pleaſure: who may juſtly ſay, *I will have Mercy on whom I will have Mercy*, namely, on him who believeth in Jeſus. *So then it is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth*, to chuſe the Condition on which he ſhall find Acceptance; *but of GOD that ſheweth Mercy*, that accepteth none at all, but of his own free Love, his unmerited Goodneſs. *Therefore hath he Mercy on whom he will have Mercy*, viz. on thoſe who believe on the Son of his Love: *And whom he will*, that is, thoſe who believe not, *he hardeneth*, leaves at laſt to the Hardneſs of their Hearts.

8. One Reaſon, however, we may humbly conceive, of GOD's fixing this Condition of Juſtification, *If thou believeſt in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt thou ſhalt be ſaved*, was to *hide Pride from Man*. Pride had already deſtroyed the very Angels of GOD, had caſt down *a third Part of the Stars of Heaven*. It was likewiſe in great meaſure owing to this, when the Tempter ſaid, *Ye ſhall be as Gods*, that *Adam* fell from his own Stedfaſtneſs, and brought Sin and Death into the World. It was therefore an Inſtance of Wiſdom worthy of GOD, to appoint ſuch a Condition of Reconciliation, for him and all his Poſterity, as might effectually humble, might abaſe them to the Duſt. And ſuch is Faith. It is peculiarly fitted for this End. For he that cometh unto GOD by this Faith, muſt fix his Eye ſingly on his own Wickedneſs, on his Guilt and Helpleſſneſs, without having the leaſt Regard to any ſuppoſed Good

in himſelf to any Virtue or Righteouſneſs whatſoever. He muſt come as a *mere Sinner* inwardly and outwardly, ſelf-deſtroy'd and ſelf-condemn'd, bringing nothing to GOD but Ungodlineſs only, pleading nothing of his own but Sin and Miſery. Thus it is, and thus alone, when his *Mouth is ſtopped*, and he ſtands utterly *guilty before GOD*, that he can *look unto Jeſus*, as the whole and ſole *Propitiation for his Sins*. Thus only can he be *found in him*, and receive the *Righteouſneſs which is of GOD by Faith*.

9. Thou ungodly one, who heareſt or readeſt theſe Words, thou vile, helpleſs, miſerable Sinner, I charge thee before GOD the Judge of all, go ſtrait unto him, with all thy Ungodlineſs. Take heed thou deſtroy not thy own Soul, by pleading thy Righteouſneſs, more or leſs. Go as altogether ungodly, guilty, loſt, deſtroy'd, deſerving and dropping into Hell: And thou ſhalt then find Favour in his Sight, and know that he juſtifieth the Ungodly. As ſuch thou ſhalt be brought unto the *Blood of Sprinkling*, as an undone, helpleſs, damn'd Sinner. Thus *look unto Jeſus!* There is *the Lamb of GOD*, who *taketh away* thy *Sins!* Plead thou no Works, no Righteouſneſs of thine own! No Humility, Contrition, Sincerity. In no wiſe. That were, in very Deed, to deny the Lord that bought thee. No. Plead thou ſingly, the Blood of the Covenant, the Ranſom paid for thy proud, ſtubborn, ſinful Soul. Who art thou, that now ſeeſt and feeleſt both thine inward and outward Ungodlineſs! Thou art the Man!

Man! I want thee for my Lord. I challenge *Thee* for a Child of GOD by Faith. The Lord hath Need of thee. Thou who feeleſt thou art juſt fit for Hell, art juſt fit to advance his Glory: The Glory of his free Grace, juſtifying the Ungodly and him that worketh not. O come quickly. Believe in the Lord Jeſus; and *thou*, even *thou* art reconciled to GOD.

The Righteouſneſs of Faith.

A

SERMON

On ROMANS x. 5, 6, 7, 8,

ROM. x. 5, 6, 7, 8.

Moſes *deſcribeth the Righteouſneſs which is of the Law, that the Man which doeth thoſe Things ſhall live by them.*

But the Righteouſneſs which is of Faith ſpeaketh on this wiſe. Say not in thine Heart, who ſhall aſcend into Heaven? that is, to bring Chriſt down from Above:

Or who ſhall deſcend into the Deep? that is, to bring Chriſt again from the Dead.

But what ſaith it? The Word is nigh thee, even in thy Mouth and in thy Heart; that is the Word of Faith, which we preach.

1. THE Apoſtle does not here oppoſe the Covenant given by *Moſes*, to the Covenant given by Chriſt. If we ever imagined this, it was for want of obſerving, that the latter, as well as the former Part of theſe Words, were ſpoken by *Moſes* himſelf, to the People of *Iſrael*, and that, concerning the Covenant which then was. (*Deut.* xxx. 11, 12, 14.) But it is the Covenant of *Grace*, which GOD through Chriſt hath eſtabliſhed with Men in all Ages, (as well before, and under the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation, as ſince GOD was manifeſt in the Fleſh) which St. *Paul* here oppoſes to the Covenant of *Works*, made with *Adam*

while in Paradiſe; but commonly ſuppoſed to be the only Covenant which GOD had made with Man, particularly by thoſe *Jews* of whom the Apoſtle writes.

2. Of theſe it was that he ſo affectionately ſpeaks, in the Beginning of this Chapter. *My Heart's Deſire and Prayer to GOD for Iſrael is, that they may be ſaved. For I bear them Record, that they have a Zeal for GOD, but not according to Knowledge. For they being ignorant of GOD's Righteouſneſs* (of the Juſtification that flows from his mere Grace and Mercy, freely forgiving our Sins through the Son of his Love, through the Redemption which is in Jeſus) *and ſeeking to eſtabliſh their own Righteouſneſs*, (their own Holineſs, antecedent to Faith, in *him that juſtifieth the Ungodly*, as the Ground of their Pardon and Acceptance) *have not ſubmitted themſelves unto the Righteouſneſs of GOD*, and conſequently ſeek Death in the Error of their Life.

3. They were ignorant, that *Chriſt is the End of the Law for Righteouſneſs to every one that believeth*, that by the Oblation of himſelf once offered, he had put an End to the firſt Law or Covenant (which indeed was not given by GOD to *Moſes*, but to *Adam* in his State of Innocence) the ſtrict Tenor whereof, without any Abatement was, "Do this and live:" And at the ſame time purchaſed for us that better Covenant, "Believe and live;" Believe and thou ſhalt be ſaved; now ſaved both from the Guilt and Power of Sin, and, of Conſequence, from the Wages of it.

4. And how many are equally ignorant now, even among thoſe who are called by the Name of

of Chriſt? How many who have now a *Zeal for God*, yet have it not *according to Knowledge*: But are ſtill *ſeeking to eſtabliſh their own Righteouſneſs*, as the Ground of their Pardon and Acceptance; and therefore vehemently refuſe, to *ſubmit themſelves unto the Righteouſneſs of GOD?* Surely my Heart's Deſire, and Prayer to GOD for you, Brethren, is, that ye may be ſaved. And in order to remove this grand Stumbling-block out of your way, I will endeavour to ſhew, Firſt, What *the Righteouſneſs* is, *which is of the Law*, and what *the Righteouſneſs which is of Faith*; Secondly, The Folly of truſting in *the Righteouſneſs of the Law*, and the Wiſdom of *ſubmitting to that which is of Faith.*

I. 1. And, firſt, *The Righteouſneſs which is of the Law, ſaith, the Man which doth theſe Things, ſhall live by them.* Conſtantly and perfectly obſerve all theſe Things to do them, and then thou ſhalt live for ever. This Law or Covenant (uſually called, The Covenant of *Works*) given by GOD to Man in Paradiſe, required an Obedience, perfect in all its Parts, entire and wanting nothing, as the Condition of his eternal Continuance, in the Holineſs and Happineſs wherein he was created.

2. It required, That Man ſhould fulfil all Righteouſneſs, inward and outward, negative and poſitive: That he ſhould not only abſtain from every idle Word, and avoid every evil Work, but ſhould keep every Affection, every Deſire, every Thought in Obedience to the Will of GOD. That he ſhould continue holy, as he which had created him was holy, both in Heart

and in all manner of Converſation: That he ſhould be pure in Heart, even as GOD is pure; perfect as his Father in Heaven was perfect: That he ſhould love the Lord his GOD with all his Heart, with all his Soul, with all his Mind, and with all his Strength: That he ſhould love every Soul which GOD had made, even as GOD had loved him: That by this univerſal Benevolence, he ſhould *dwell in God* (who is Love) *and GOD in him*: That he ſhould ſerve the Lord his GOD with all his Strength, and in all Things ſingly aim at his Glory.

3. Theſe were the Things which the Righteouſneſs of the Law required, that he who did them might live thereby. But it farther required, That this entire Obedience to God, this inward and outward Holineſs, this Conformity both of Heart and Life to his Will, ſhould be perfect in *Degree*. No abatement, no Allowance could poſſibly be made, for falling ſhort in any Degree, as to any Jot or Tittle either of the outward or the inward Law. If every Commandment relating to outward Things was obeyed, yet that was not ſufficient, unleſs every one was obeyed with all the Strength, in the higheſt Meaſure, and moſt perfect Manner. Nor did it anſwer the Demand of this Covenant, to love GOD with every Power and Faculty, unleſs he were loved with the full Capacity of each, with the whole Poſſibility of the Soul.

4. One Thing more was indiſpenſably required by the Righteouſneſs of the Law, namely, that this univerſal Obedience, this perfect Holineſs both of Heart and Life, ſhould be perfectly uninterrupted alſo, ſhould continue without any Intermiſſion,

termiſſion, from the Moment wherein GOD created Man, and breathed into his Noſtrils the Breath of Life, until the Days of his Trial ſhould be ended, and he ſhould be confirmed in Life everlaſting.

5. The Righteouſneſs then which is of the Law, ſpeaketh on this wiſe. "Thou, O Man of GOD, ſtand faſt in Love, in the Image of GOD wherein thou art made. If thou wilt remain in Life, keep the Commandments, which are now written in thy Heart. Love the Lord thy GOD with all thy Heart. Love as thyſelf every Soul that he hath made. Deſire nothing but GOD. Aim at GOD in every Thought, in every Word and Work. Swerve not in one Motion of Body or Soul, from him thy Mark and the Prize of thy high Calling. And let all that is in thee praiſe his holy Name, every Power and Faculty of thy Soul, in every Kind, in every Degree, and at every Moment of thine Exiſtence. *This do, and thou ſhalt live:* Thy Light ſhall ſhine, thy Love ſhall flame more and more, till thou art received up into the Houſe of GOD in the Heavens, to rejgn with him for ever and ever."

6. *But the Righteouſneſs which is of Faith ſpeaketh on this wiſe: Say not in thine Heart, who ſhall aſcend into Heaven, that is, to bring down Chriſt from Above* (as tho' it were ſome impoſſible Taſk, which GOD required thee previouſly to perform, in order to thine Acceptance:) *Or, who ſhall deſcend into the Deep, that is, to bring up Chriſt from the Dead*; (as tho' that were ſtill remaining to be done, for the Sake of which thou wert to be accepted. *But what ſaith it? The*

Word (according to the Tenor of which, thou mayſt now be accepted as an Heir of Life eternal) *is nigh thee, even in thy Mouth and in thy Heart, that is, the Word of Faith, which we preach:* The new Covenant which GOD hath now eſtabliſhed with ſinful Man, through Chriſt Jeſus.

7. *By the Righteouſneſs which is of Faith,* is meant, that Condition of Juſtification (and in conſequence of preſent and final Salvation, if we endure therein unto the End) which was given by GOD to *fallen Man,* through the Merits and Mediation of his only begotten Son. This was in part revealed to *Adam* ſoon after his Fall, being contained in the Original Promiſe, made to him and his Seed, concernieg the Seed of the Woman, who ſhould *bruiſe the* Serpent's *Head* *. It was a little more clearly revealed to *Abraham,* by the Angel of GOD from Heaven, ſaying, † *By Myſelf have I ſworn, ſaith the Lord, that in thy Seed ſhall all the Nations of the Earth be bleſſed.* It was yet more fully made known to *Moſes,* to *David,* and to the Prophets that followed: And through them, to many of the People of GOD, in their reſpective Generations. But ſtill the Bulk even of theſe were ignorant of it; and very few underſtood it clearly. Still *Life and Immortality* were not ſo *brought to Light* to the *Jews* of old, as they are now unto us *by the Goſpel.*

8. Now this Covenant ſaith not to ſinful Man "Perform unſinning Obedience and live." If this were the Term, he would have no more Benefit by all which Chriſt hath done and ſuffered

* Gen. iii. 15. † Gen. xxii. 15, 18.

for

for him, than if he was required, in order to Life, to *aſcend into Heaven and bring down Chriſt from Above*; or to *deſcend into the Deep*, into the inviſible World, and *bring up Chriſt from the Dead*. It doth not require any Impoſſibility to be done (altho' to mere Man, what it requires would be impoſſible; but not, to Man aſſiſted by the Spirit of GOD:) this were only, to mock human Weakneſs. Indeed, ſtrictly ſpeaking, the Covenant of *Grace* doth not require us, to *do* any thing at all, as abſolutely and indiſpenſably neceſſary in order to our Juſtification: But only, to *believe* in him, who, for the Sake of his Son, and the Propitiation which he hath made, *juſtifieth the Ungodly that worketh not*, and imputes his Faith to him for Righteouſneſs. Even ſo *Abraham believed in the Lord* §, *and he counted it to him for Righteouſneſs*. † *And he received the Sign of Circumciſion, a Seal of the Righteouſneſs of Faith—that he might be the Father of all them that believe— that Righteouſneſs might be imputed unto them alſo*. ‡ *Now it was not written for his ſake alone, that it* (i. e. Faith) *was imputed to him. But for us alſo, to whom it ſhall be imputed* (to whom Faith ſhall be imputed for Righteouſneſs, ſhall ſtand in the ſtead of perfect Obedience, in order to our Acceptance with GOD) *if we believe on him who raiſed up Jeſus our Lord from the Dead: Who was delivered* to Death *for our Offences, and was raiſed again for our Juſtification:* "For the Aſſurance of the Remiſſion of our Sins. and of a ſecond Life to come to them that believe."

9. What ſaith then the Covenant of Forgiveneſs, of unmerited Love, of pardoning Mercy? *Believe*

§ Gen. xv. 6. † Rom. iv. 11. ‡ Ver. 23, 24, 25.

in

in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved. In the Day thou believeſt, thou ſhalt ſurely live. Thou ſhalt be reſtored to the Favour of GOD; and in his Pleaſure is Life. Thou ſhalt be ſaved from the Curſe and from the Wrath of GOD. Thou ſhalt be quickened from the Death of Sin, into the Life of Righteouſneſs. And if thou endure to the End, believing in Jeſus, thou ſhalt never taſte the ſecond Death, but having ſuffered with thy Lord, ſhalt alſo live and reign with him for ever and ever.

10. Now *this Word is nigh thee.* This Condition of Life, is plain, eaſy, always at hand. *It is in thy Mouth and in thy Heart,* through the Operation of the Spirit of GOD. The Moment *thou believeſt in thine Heart* in him, whom *GOD hath raiſed from the Dead,* and *confeſſeſt with thy Mouth the Lord Jeſus,* as *thy* Lord and *thy* GOD, *thou ſhalt be ſaved* from Condemnation, from the Guilt and Puniſhment of thy *former* Sins, and ſhalt have Power to ſerve GOD in true Holineſs, all the *remaining* Days of thy Life.

11. What is the Difference then between the *Righteouſneſs which is of the Law,* and the *Righteouſneſs which is of Faith?* Between the Firſt Covenant, or the Covenant of Works, and the Second, the Covenant of Grace? The eſſential, unchangeable Difference is this: The one ſuppoſes him to whom it is given, to be already holy and happy, created in the Image and enjoying the Favour of GOD; and preſcribes the Condition whereon he may continue therein, in Love and Joy, Life and Immortality. The other ſuppoſes him to whom it is given, to be now unholy and unhappy; fallen ſhort of the glorious Image of GOD,

God, having the Wrath of God abiding on him, and haſtening through Sin, whereby his Soul is dead, to bodily Death, and Death everlaſting. And to Man in this State, it preſcribes the Condition, whereon he may regain the Pearl he has loſt: May recover the Favour, and the Image of God, may retrieve the Life of God in his Soul, and be reſtored to the Knowledge and the Love of God, which is the Beginning of Life eternal.

12. Again, the Covenant of Works, in order to Man's *Continuance* in the Favour of God, in his Knowledge and Love, in Holineſs and Happineſs, required of perfect Man, a *perfect* and uninterrupted *Obedience*, to every Point of the Law of God. Whereas the Covenant of Grace, in order to Man's *Recovery*, of the Favour and Life of God, requires only *Faith*; living Faith in him, who through God juſtifies him that *obeyed not*.

13. Yet again: The Covenant of Works required of *Adam* and all his Children, to *pay the Price themſelves*, in Conſideration of which, they were to receive all the future Bleſſings of God. But in the Covenant of Grace, ſeeing we have nothing to pay, God *frankly forgives* us *all:* Provided only, that we believe in him, who hath *paid the Price for us*; who hath given himſelf a *Propitiation for our Sins, for the Sins of the whole*

14. Thus the firſt Covenant required what is now *afar off* from all the Children of Men; namely, unſinning Obedience, which is far from thoſe who are *conceived and born in Sin.* Whereas the ſecond requires what is nigh at hand; as tho' it ſhould ſay, Thou art Sin: God is Love. Thou by Sin art fallen ſhort of the Glory of God;

God; yet there is Mercy with him. Bring then all thy Sins to the Pardoning God, and they ſhall vaniſh away as a Cloud. If thou wert not ungodly, there would be no room for him to juſtify thee as ungodly. But now draw near, in full Aſſurance of Faith. He ſpeaketh, and it is done. Fear not, only believe; for even the juſt God *juſtifieth all that believe in Jeſus.*

II. 1. Theſe Things conſidered, it will be eaſy to ſhew, as I propoſed to do in the ſecond Place, the Folly of truſting in the *Righteouſneſs which is of the Law*, and the Wiſdom of *ſubmitting to the Righteouſneſs which is of Faith.*

The Folly of thoſe who ſtill truſt, in the *Righteouſneſs which is of the Law*, the Terms of which are, Do this and live, may abundantly appear from thence. They ſet out wrong. Their very firſt Step is a fundamental Miſtake. For before they can ever think of claiming any Bleſſing on the Terms of this Covenant, they muſt ſuppoſe themſelves to be in his State, with whom this Covenant was made. But how vain a Suppoſition is this? Since it was made with *Adam* in a State of Innocence. How weak therefore muſt that whole Building be, which ſtands on ſuch a Foundation? And how fooliſh are they who thus build on the Sand? Who ſeem never to have conſidered, that the Covenant of Works was not given to Man, when he was dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins, but when he was alive to God, when he knew no Sin, but was holy as God is holy: Who forget, that it was never deſign'd for the *Recovery* of the Favour and Life of God once loſt, but only for the *Continuance* and Increaſe

creaſe thereof, till it ſhould be compleat in Life everlaſting.

2. Neither do they conſider, who are thus *ſeeking to eſtabliſh their own Righteouſneſs which is of the Law*, what manner of Obedience or Righteouſneſs that is, which the Law indiſpenſably requires. It muſt be perfect and entire, in every Point, or it anſwers not the Demand of the Law. But which of you is able to perform ſuch Obedience? Or, conſequently, to live thereby? Who among you fulfills every Jot and Tittle even of the outward Commandments of God? Doing nothing, great or ſmall, which God forbids? Leaving nothing undone which he enjoins? Speaking no *idle Word?* Having your Converſation always *meet to miniſter Grace to the Hearers?* And *whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do*, doing *all to the Glory of GOD?* And how much leſs are you able to fulfil all the inward Commandments of God? Thoſe which require, that every Temper and Motion of your Soul ſhould be Holineſs unto the Lord? Are you able, To *love GOD with all your Heart?* To love all Mankind as your own Soul? To *pray without ceaſing? In every thing to give Thanks?* To have God always before you? And to keep every Affection, Deſire and Thought, in Obedience to his Law?

3. You ſhould farther conſider, That the Righteouſneſs of the Law requires, not only the obeying every Command of God, negative and poſitive, internal and external, but likewiſe in the perfect Degree. In every Inſtance whatever, the Voice of the Law is, Thou ſhalt ſerve the Lord thy God with all thy Strength. It allows no Abatement

ment of any kind. It excuſes no Defect. It condemns every coming ſhort of the full Meaſure of Obedience, and immediately pronounces a Curſe on the Offender. It regards only the invariable Rules of Juſtice, and ſaith, " I know not to ſhew Mercy."

4. Who then can appear before ſuch a Judge, which is *extreme to mark what is done amiſs?* How weak are they who deſire to be tried at the Bar, where *no Fleſh living can be juſtified?* None of the Offspring of *Adam*. For ſuppoſe we did now keep every Commandment with all our Strength: Yet one ſingle Breach which ever was, utterly deſtroys our whole Claim to Life. If we have ever offended, in any one Point, this Righteouſneſs is at an end. For the Law condemns all who do not perform uninterrupted as well as perfect Obedience. So that according to the Sentence of this, for him who hath once ſinned, in any Degree, *there remaineth only a fearful Looking for of fiery Indignation, which ſhall devour the Adverſaries* of GOD.

5. Is it not then the very Fooliſhneſs of Folly, for fallen Man to ſeek Life by this Righteouſneſs? For Man, who was *ſhapen in Wickedneſs*, and *in Sin did* his *Mother conceive him:* Man, who is by Nature all *earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh*, altogether *corrupt and abominable:* In whom, till he find Grace, *dwelleth no good Thing*; nay, who cannot of himſelf think one good Thought? Who is indeed all Sin, a mere Lump of Ungodlineſs, and who commits Sin in every breath he draws; whoſe actual Tranſgreſſions, in Word and Deed, are more in Number than the Hairs of his Head! What Stupidity, what Senſeleſneſs muſt it be for

for ſuch an unclean, guilty, helpleſs Worm as this, to dream of ſeeking Acceptance by *his own Righteouſneſs*, of living by *the Righteouſneſs which is of the Law?*

6. Now whatſoever Conſiderations prove the Folly of truſting in the *Righteouſneſs which is of the Law*, prove equally the Wiſdom of ſubmitting to *the Righteouſneſs which is of GOD by Faith*. This were eaſy to be ſhewn with regard to each of the preceding Conſiderations. But to wave this, the Wiſdom of the firſt Step hereto, the diſclaiming our own Righteouſneſs, plainly appears from hence, That it is acting according to Truth, to the real Nature of Things. For what is it more, than to acknowledge with our Heart as well as Lips, the true State wherein we are? To acknowledge, that we bring with us into the World, a corrupt, ſinful Nature; more corrupt indeed than we can eaſily conceive, or find Words to expreſs? That hereby we are prone to all that is evil, and averſe from all that is good; that we are full of Pride, Self-will, unruly Paſſions, fooliſh Deſires; vile and inordinate Affections; Lovers of the World, Lovers of Pleaſure more than Lovers of GOD? That our Lives have been no better than our Hearts, but many ways ungodly and unholy; inſomuch that our actual Sins, both in Word and Deed, have been as the Stars of Heaven for Multitude: That on all theſe Accounts, we are diſpleaſing to him, who is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity; and deſerve nothing from him, but Indignation and Wrath and Death, the due Wages of Sin? That we cannot by any of our Righteouſneſs, (for indeed, we have none at all) nor

nor by any of our Works (for they are as the Tree from which they grow) appeaſe the Wrath of GOD, or avert the Puniſhment we have juſtly deſerved? Yea, that, if left to ourſelves, we ſhall only wax worſe and worſe, ſink deeper and deeper into Sin, offend GOD more and more both with our evil Works and with the evil Tempers of our carnal Mind, till we fill up the Meaſure of our Iniquities, and bring upon ourſelves ſwift Deſtruction? And is not this the very State wherein by Nature we are? To acknowledge this then, both with our Heart and Lips, that is, to diſclaim our own Righteouſneſs, *the Righteouſneſs which is of the Law*, is to act according to the real Nature of Things, and conſequently is an Inſtance of true Wiſdom.

7. The Wiſdom of ſubmitting to *the Righteouſneſs of Faith*, appears farther from this Conſideration, That it is the Righteouſneſs of GOD: I mean here, It is that Method of Reconciliation with GOD, which hath been choſe and eſtabliſhed by GOD himſelf, not only as he is the GOD of Wiſdom, but as he is the Sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth, and of every Creature which he hath made. Now, as it is not meet for Man to ſay unto GOD, What doſt thou? As none who is not utterly void of Underſtanding, will contend with one that is mightier than he, with him whoſe Kingdom ruleth over all; ſo it is true Wiſdom, it is a Mark of ſound Underſtanding, to acquieſce in whatever he hath choſen, to ſay in this, as in all Things, "It is the Lord: Let him do what ſeemeth him Good."

8. It may be farther conſidered, That it was of mere Grace, of free Love, of undeſerved Mercy,

Mercy, that GOD hath vouchſafed to ſinful Man, any way of Reconciliation with himſelf, that we were not cut away from his Hand, and utterly blotted out of his Remembrance. Therefore whatever Method he is pleaſed to appoint, of his tender Mercy, of his unmerited Goodneſs, whereby his Enemies, who have ſo deeply revolted from him, ſo long and obſtinately rebelled againſt him, may ſtill find favour in his Sight, it is doubtleſs our Wiſdom to accept with all Thankfulneſs.

9. To mention but one Conſideration more. It is Wiſdom to aim at the beſt End by the beſt Means. Now the beſt End which any Creature can purſue, is Happineſs in God. And the beſt End a fallen Creature can purſue is, The Recovery of the Favour and Image of GOD. But the beſt, indeed the only Means under Heaven given to Man, whereby he may regain the Favour of God, which is better than Life itſelf, or the Image of GOD, which is the true Life of the Soul, is the ſubmitting to the *Righteouſneſs which is of Faith*, the believing in the only-begotten Son of GOD.

III. 1. Whoſoever therefore thou art who deſireſt to be forgiven and reconciled to the Favour of GOD; Do not ſay in thy Heart, "I muſt *firſt do this*; I muſt *firſt* conquer every Sin; break off every evil Word and Work, and do all Good to all Men: Or, I muſt *firſt* go to Church, receive the Lord's Supper, hear more Sermons, and ſay more Prayers." Alas, my Brother, thou art clean gone out of the Way, Thou art ſtill *ignorant of the Righteouſneſs of*

GOD, and art *ſeeking to eſtabliſh thy own Righteouſneſs*, as the Ground of thy Reconciliation. Knoweſt thou not, that thou canſt do nothing but ſin, till thou art reconciled to GOD? Wherefore then doſt thou ſay, I *muſt do this* and this *firſt*, and then I ſhall believe. Nay, but *Firſt Believe*. Believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Propitiation for thy Sins. Let this good Foundation *firſt* be laid, and then thou ſhalt do all things well.

2. Neither ſay in thy Heart, "I can't be accepted yet, becauſe I am not *good enough*." Who is *good enough?* Who ever was? To merit Acceptance at GOD's Hands! Was ever any Child of *Adam good enough* for this? Or will any, till the Conſummation of all Things? And as for thee, thou art not Good at all: There dwelleth in thee no good Thing. And thou never wilt be, till thou believe in Jeſus. Rather thou wilt find thyſelf worſe and worſe. But is there any need of being worſe, in order to be accepted? Art thou not *bad enough* already? Indeed thou art, and that GOD knoweth. And thou thyſelf canſt not deny it. Then delay not. All Things are now ready. *Ariſe and waſh away thy Sins*. The Fountain is open. Now is the Time, to waſh thee white in the Blood of the Lamb. Now he ſhall *purge* thee as *with Hyſſop*, *and* thou *ſhalt be clean*; *he* ſhall *waſh* thee, and thou *ſhalt be whiter than Snow*.

3. Do not ſay, "But I am not *contrite enough*: I am not *ſenſible enough* of my Sins." I know it. I would to GOD, thou wert more *ſenſible* of them, more *contrite* a thouſand fold than thou art. But do not ſtay for this. It may be GOD will make thee

thee ſo, not before thou believeſt, but by believing. It may be, thou wilt not weep much, till thou loveſt much, becauſe thou haſt had much forgiven. In the mean time, look unto Jeſus. Behold how he loveth thee! What could he have done more for thee which he hath not done?

" O Lamb of GOD, was ever Pain,
Was ever Love like Thine!"

Look ſteddily upon him, till he looks on thee, and breaks thy hard Heart. Then ſhall thy *Head* be *Waters*, *and* thy *Eyes Fountains of Tears*.

4. Nor yet do thou ſay, " I muſt *do* ſomething more, *before* I come to Chriſt." I grant, ſuppoſing thy Lord ſhould delay his coming, it were meet and right to wait for his appearing, in doing, ſo far as thou haſt Power, whatſoever he hath commanded thee. But there is no Neceſſity for making ſuch a Suppoſition. How knoweſt thou that he will delay? Perhaps he will appear, as the Day-ſpring from on High, before the Morning-light. O do not ſet him a Time. Expect him every Hour. Now, he is nigh! Even at the Door!

5. And to what End wouldſt thou wait for *more Sincerity*, *before* thy Sins are blotted out? To make thee more worthy of the Grace of GOD? Alas, thou art ſtill *eſtabliſhing thy own Righteouſneſs*. He will have Mercy, not becauſe thou art worthy of it, but becauſe his Compaſſions fail not: Not becauſe thou art righteous; but becauſe Jeſus Chriſt hath atoned for thy Sins.

Again, if there be any thing good in *Sincerity*, why doſt expect it, *before* thou haſt Faith? Seeing

ing Faith itſelf is the only Rout of whatever is really good and holy.

Above all, How long wilt thou forget, That whatſoever thou doſt, or whatſoever thou haſt, before thy Sins are forgiven thee, it avails nothing with GOD, toward the procuring of thy Forgiveneſs? Yea, and that it muſt all be caſt behind thy Back, trampled under Foot, made no Account of, or thou wilt never find Favour in GOD's Sight; becauſe until then thou canſt not aſk it, as a mere Sinner, guilty, loſt, undone, having nothing to plead, nothing to offer to GOD, but only the Merits of his well-beloved Son, *who loved* thee, *and gave himſelf for* thee.

6. To conclude. Whoſoever thou art, O Man, who haſt the Sentence of Death in thyſelf, who feeleſt thyſelf a condemned Sinner, and haſt the Wrath of GOD abiding on thee: Unto thee ſaith the Lord, Not, Do this; perfectly obey all my Commands and live: But, *Believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved. The Word of Faith is nigh unto thee*; Now, at this inſtant, in the preſent Moment, and in thy preſent State, Sinner as thou art, juſt as thou art, Believe the Goſpel: And *I will be merciful unto* thy *Unrighteouſneſs and* thy *Iniquities will I remember no more.*

The Way to the Kingdom.

A

SERMON

On MARK i. 15.

MARK i. 15.

The Kingdom of GOD is at hand: Repent ye, and believe the Goſpel.

THESE Words naturally lead us to conſider, Firſt, The Nature of True Religion, here termed by our Lord, *The Kingdom of GOD*, which, ſaith he, *is at hand:* And Secondly, The Way thereto, which he points out in thoſe Words, *Repent ye, and believe the Goſpel.*

I. 1. We are Firſt, to conſider, The Nature of True Religion, here term'd by our Lord, *The Kingdom of GOD.* The ſame Expreſſion the great Apoſtle uſes in his Epiſtle to the *Romans*, where he likewiſe explains his Lord's Words, ſaying, *The Kingdom of GOD is not Meat and Drink; but Righteouſneſs, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt.* Chap. xiv. 17.

2. *The Kingdom of GOD*, or True Religion, *is not Meat and Drink.* It is well known, that not only the unconverted Jews, but great Numbers of thoſe who had received the Faith of Chriſt, were notwithſtanding *zealous of the Law*, (*Acts* xxi. 20.) even the Ceremonial Law of *Moſes.* Whatſoever therefore they found written therein, either concerning Meat and Drink-

Offerings, or the Diſtinction between clean and unclean Meats, they not only obſerv'd themſelves, but vehemently preſs'd the ſame, even on thoſe *among the Gentiles* (or Heathens) *who were turned to GOD*. Yea, to ſuch a Degree, that ſome of them taught, whereſoever they came among them, *Except ye be circumciſed, and keep the Law*, (the whole Ritual Law) *ye cannot be ſaved*. Acts xv. 1, 24.

3. In Oppoſition to theſe, the Apoſtle declares, both here and in many other places, That True Religion does not conſiſt in *Meat* and *Drink*, or in any Ritual Obſervances: Nor indeed in any outward Thing whatever, in any Thing exterior to the Heart; the whole Subſtance thereof lying in *Righteouſneſs, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt*.

4. Not in any *outward Thing*; ſuch as *Forms* or *Ceremonies*, even of the moſt excellent Kind. Suppoſing theſe to be ever ſo decent and ſignificant, ever ſo expreſſive of inward Things: Suppoſing them ever ſo helpful, not only to the Vulgar, whoſe Thought reaches little farther than their Sight; but even to Men of Underſtanding, Men of ſtronger Capacities, as doubtleſs they may ſometimes be: Yea, ſuppoſing them, as in the Caſe of the Jews, to be appointed by GOD himſelf; yet even during the Period of Time wherein that Appointment remains in Force, True Religion does not principally conſiſt therein; nay, ſtrictly ſpeaking, not at all. How much more muſt this hold concerning ſuch Rites and Forms, as are only of Human Appointment? The Religion of Chriſt riſes infinitely higher, and lies immenſely deeper than all theſe. Theſe

are

are good in their Place; juſt ſo far as they are in fact ſubſervient to true Religion. And it were Superſtition to object againſt them, while they are applied only as occaſional Helps to Human Weakneſs. But let no Man carry them farther. Let no Man dream, that they have any intrinſick Worth: Or that Religion cannot ſubſiſt without them. This were to make them an Abomination to the Lord.

5. The Nature of Religion is ſo far from conſiſting in theſe, in *Forms* of Worſhip, or *Rites* and *Ceremonies*, that it does not properly conſiſt in any *outward Actions*, of what Kind ſoever. It is true, a Man cannot have any Religion, who is guilty of vicious, immoral Actions; or who does to others, what he would not they ſhould do to him, if he were in the ſame Circumſtance. And it is alſo true, that he can have no real Religion, who *knows to do good, and doth it not*. Yet may a Man both abſtain from outward Evil, and do Good, and ſtill have no Religion. Yea, two Perſons may do the ſame outward Work, ſuppoſe, Feeding the Hungry, or Cloathing the Naked: And, in the mean Time, one of theſe may be truly Religious, and the other have no Religion at all: For the one may act from the Love of God, and the other from the Love of Praiſe. So manifeſt it is; that altho' true Religion naturally leads to every good Word and Work, yet the real Nature thereof lies deeper ſtill, even in *the hidden Man of the Heart*.

6. I ſay, of *the Heart*. For neither does Religion conſiſt in *Orthodoxy* or *Right Opinions*; which altho' they are not properly outward things, are not in the Heart, but the Underſtanding.

A Man may be orthodox in every Point; he may not only eſpouſe Right Opinions, but zealouſly defend them againſt all Oppoſers: He may think juſtly concerning the Incarnation of our Lord, concerning the ever bleſſed Trinity, and every other Doctrine, contained in the Oracles of GOD: He may aſſent to all the three Creeds; that call'd The Apoſtles', the *Nicene*, and the *Athanaſian*: And yet 'tis poſſible, he may have no Religion at all, no more than a *Jew*, *Turk*, or *Pagan*. He may be almoſt as orthodox as —— the Devil; (tho' indeed, not altogether. For every Man errs in ſomething; whereas we can't well conceive him to hold any erroneous Opinion) and may all the while be as great a Stranger as he, to the Religion of the Heart.

7. This alone is Religion, truly ſo call'd: This alone is in the Sight of GOD of great Price. The Apoſtle ſums it all up in three Particulars, *Righteouſneſs, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt.* And firſt, *Righteouſneſs.* We cannot be at a Loſs concerning this, if we remember the Words of our Lord deſcribing the two grand Branches thereof, on which *hang all the Law and the Prophets. Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy GOD with all thy Heart, and with all thy Mind, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy* * *Strength. This is the Firſt and great Commandment*, the firſt and great Branch of Chriſtian Righteouſneſs. Thou ſhalt delight thyſelf in the Lord thy God; thou ſhalt ſeek and find all Happineſs in him. He ſhall be *thy Shield, and thy exceeding great Reward*, in Time and in Eternity. All thy Bones ſhall ſay, *Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? And there is*

* Mark xii. 30.

none

none upon Earth that I deſire beſide thee! Thou ſhalt hear, and fulfil his Word who ſaith, *My Son, give me thy Heart.* And having given him thy Heart, thy inmoſt Soul, to reign there without a Rival, thou may'ſt well cry out, in the Fulneſs of thy Heart, *I will love thee, O Lord, my Strength. The Lord is my ſtrong Rock and my Defence: My Saviour, my GOD, and my Might, in whom I will truſt; my Buckler, the Horn alſo of my Salvation, and my Refuge.*

8. And the Second Commandment is like unto this; the Second great Branch of Chriſtian Righteouſneſs is cloſely and inſeparably connected therewith, even *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thyſelf. Thou ſhalt love* — Thou ſhalt embrace with the moſt tender Good-will, the moſt earneſt and cordial Affection, the moſt inflamed Deſires of preventing or removing all Evil, and of procuring for him every poſſible Good — *Thy Neighbour* — that is, not only thy Friend, thy Kinſman, or thy Acquaintance; not only the Virtuous, the Friendly, him that loves thee, that prevents or returns thy Kindneſs; but every Child of Man, every human Creature, every Soul which God hath made: Not excepting him whom thou never haſt ſeen in the Fleſh, whom thou knoweſt not either by Face or Name: Not excepting him whom thou knoweſt to be evil and unthankful, him that ſtill deſpightfully uſes and perſecutes thee. Him thou ſhalt *love as thyſelf*; with the ſame invariable Thirſt after his Happineſs in every Kind: the ſame unwearied Care to ſkreen him from whatever might grieve or hurt either his Soul or Body.

9. Now is not this Love *The fulfilling of the Law?* The Sum of all Chriſtian Righteouſneſs?

Of all inward Righteouſneſs; for it neceſſarily implies *Bowels of Mercies*, *Humbleneſs of Mind* (ſeeing *Love is not puffed up*) *Gentleneſs*, *Meekneſs*, *Long-ſuffering*, (for Love *is not provoked* but *believeth*, *hopeth*, *endureth all Things*) and of all outward Righteouſneſs; for *Love worketh no Evil to his Neighbour*, either by Word or Deed. It cannot willingly either hurt or grieve any one. And it is zealous of Good Works. Every Lover of Mankind, as he hath Opportunity, *doth good unto all Men*; being (*without Partiality and without Hyprocriſy*) *full of Mercy and good Fruits*.

10. But true Religion, or a Heart right toward God and Man, implies Happineſs as well as Holineſs. For it is not only *Righteouſneſs*, but alſo *Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt*. What Peace? *The Peace of GOD*, which God only can give and the World cannot take away: The Peace which *paſſeth all Underſtanding*, all (barely) rational Conception; being a ſupernatural Senſation, a divine Taſte of *the Powers of the World to come*: Such as the natural Man knoweth not, how wiſe ſoever in the Things of this World: Nor indeed can he know it, in his preſent State, *becauſe it is ſpiritually diſcerned*. It is a Peace that baniſhes all Doubt, all painful Uncertainty; the Spirit of God *bearing witneſs with the Spirit* of a Chriſtian, that he is *a Child of GOD*, And it baniſhes Fear, all ſuch Fear as hath Torment; the Fear of the Wrath of God, the Fear of Hell, the Fear of the Devil, and in particular, the Fear of Death: he that hath the Peace of God, *deſiring* (if it were the Will of God) *to depart and to be with Chriſt*.

11. With

11. With this Peace of GOD, wherever it is fix'd in the Soul, there is alſo *Joy in the Holy Ghoſt:* Joy wrought in the Heart by the Holy Ghoſt, by the ever bleſſed Spirit of GOD. He it is that worketh in us that calm, humble Rejoicing in GOD, through Chriſt Jeſus, *by whom we have now received the Atonement,* καταλλαγὴν, the Reconciliation with GOD; and that enables us boldly to confirm the Truth of the Royal Pſalmiſt's Declaration, *Bleſſed is the Man* (or rather *happy*) אשרי איש *whoſe Unrighteouſneſs is forgiven, and whoſe Sin is covered.* He it is that inſpires the Chriſtian Soul, with that even, ſolid Joy, which ariſes from the Teſtimony of the Spirit, that he is a Child of GOD: And that gives him to *rejoice with Joy unſpeakable, in Hope of the Glory of GOD:* Hope, both of the glorious Image of GOD, which is in part and ſhall be fully *revealed in him*; and of that Crown of Glory, which fadeth not away, reſerved in Heaven for him.

12. This Holineſs and Happineſs joined in one, are ſometimes ſtiled in the inſpired Writings, *the Kingdom of GOD,* (as by our Lord in the Text) and ſometimes, *The Kingdom of Heaven.* It is termed *the Kingdom of GOD,* becauſe it is the immediate Fruit of GOD's reigning in the Soul. So ſoon as ever he takes unto himſelf his mighty Power, and ſets up his Throne in our Hearts, they are inſtantly filled with this *Righteouſneſs and Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt.* It is called *the Kingdom of Heaven,* becauſe it is (in a Degree) Heaven opened in the Soul. For whoſoever they are that experience this, they can aver, before Angels and Men,

" Everlaſting Life is won:
Glory is on Earth begun:"

According to the conſtant Tenor of Scripture, which every where bears Record, *GOD hath given unto us eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son. He that hath the Son* (reigning in his Heart) *hath Life*, even Life everlaſting) 1 *John* v. 11, 12. *For this is Life eternal, to know thee, the only true GOD, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent*, John xvii. 3. And they to whom this is given, may confidently addreſs GOD, tho' they were in the midſt of a fiery Furnace,

" Thee — Lord, ſafe ſhielded by thy Pow'r,
Thee, Son of GOD, *Jehovah*, we adore;
In Form of Man deſcending to appear:
To thee be ceaſeleſs Hallelujah's given.
Praiſe, as in Heaven thy Throne, we offer here;
For where thy Preſence is diſplay'd, is Heaven."

13. And this *Kingdom of GOD* or of Heaven *is at hand*. As theſe Words were originally ſpoken, they implied, that *the Time* was then *fulfilled*, GOD being *made manifeſt in the Fleſh*, when he would ſet up his Kingdom among Men, and reign in the Hearts of his People. And is not the Time now fulfilled? For *lo!* ſaith he, *I am with you always*, you who preach Remiſſion of Sins in my Name, *even unto the End of the World.* (Matth. xxviii. 20.) Whereſoever therefore the Goſpel of Chriſt is preached, this his *Kingdom is nigh at hand.* It is not far from every one of you. Ye may this Hour enter thereinto, if ſo be ye hearken

hearken to his Voice, *Repent ye, and believe the Goſpel.*

II. 1. This is the Way. Walk ye in it. And firſt, Repent, that is, Know yourſelves. This is the firſt Repentance, previous to Faith; even Conviction, or Self-Knowledge. Awake then thou that ſleepeſt. Know thyſelf to be a Sinner, and what manner of Sinner thou art. Know that Corruption of thy inmoſt Nature, whereby thou art very far gone from Original Righteouſneſs, whereby *the Fleſh luſteth* always *contrary to the Spirit*, through that *carnal Mind which is Enmity againſt GOD*, which *is not ſubject to the Law of GOD, neither indeed can be.* Know that thou art corrupted in every Power, in every Faculty of thy Soul; that thou art totally corrupted in every one of theſe, all the Foundations being out of Courſe. The Eyes of thine Underſtanding are darkened ſo that they cannot diſcern GOD or the Things of GOD. The Clouds of Ignorance and Error reſt upon thee, and cover thee with the Shadow of Death. Thou knoweſt nothing yet, as thou oughteſt to know, neither GOD, nor the World, nor thyſelf. Thy Will is no longer the Will of GOD, but is utterly perverſe and diſtorted, averſe from all Good, from all which GOD loves, and prone to all Evil, to every Abomination which GOD hateth. Thy Affections are alienated from GOD, and ſcattered abroad over all the Earth. All thy Paſſions, both thy Deſires and Averſions, thy Joys and Sorrows, thy Hopes and Fears, are out of Frame, are either undue in their Degree, or placed on undue Objects. So that there is no Soundneſs in thy Soul; but *from the Crown of the*

Head to the Sole of the Foot (to uſe the ſtrong Expreſſion of the Prophet) there are only *Wounds and Bruiſes and putrifying Sores.*

2. Such is the inbred Corruption of thy Heart, of thy very inmoſt Nature. And what manner of Branches canſt thou expect to grow, from ſuch an evil Root? Hence ſprings Unbelief, ever departing from the living GOD: Saying, "Who is the Lord that I ſhould ſerve him? Tuſh! Thou, GOD, careſt not for it." Hence Independence, affecting to be like the Moſt High; hence Pride in all its Forms, teaching thee to ſay, "I am rich, and increaſed in Goods, and have need of nothing." From this evil Fountain flow forth the bitter Streams of Vanity, Thirſt of Praiſe; Ambition, Covetouſneſs; the Luſt of the Fleſh, the Luſt of the Eye, and the Pride of Life. From this ariſe Anger, Hatred, Malice, Revenge, Envy, Jealouſy, evil Surmiſions: From this all the fooliſh and hurtful Luſts, that now *pierce thee through with many Sorrows*, and if not timely prevented, will at length *drown thy Soul in everlaſting Perdition.*

3. And what Fruits can grow on ſuch Branches as theſe? Only ſuch as are bitter and evil continually. Of Pride cometh Contention, vain boaſting, ſeeking and receiving Praiſe of Men, and ſo robbing GOD of that Glory which he cannot give unto another. Of the Luſt of the Fleſh come Gluttony or Drunkenneſs, Luxury or Senſuality: Fornication, Uncleanneſs, variouſly defiling that Body, which was deſigned for a Temple of the Holy Ghoſt: Of Unbelief, every evil Word and Work. But the Time would fail, ſhould'ſt thou reckon up all; all the idle Words

thou haſt ſpoken, provoking the Moſt High, grieving the holy One of *Iſrael:* All the evil Works thou has done, either wholly evil in themſelves, or at leaſt, not done to the Glory of God. For thy actual Sins are more than thou art able to expreſs, more than the Hairs of thy Head. Who can number the Sands of the Sea, or the Drops of Rain, or thy Iniquities?

4. And knoweſt thou not, that *the Wages of Sin is Death?* Death not only temporal, but eternal. *The Soul that ſinneth it ſhall die:* For the Mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken it. It ſhall die the ſecond Death. This is the Sentence, to *be puniſhed* with never ending-Death, *with everlaſting Deſtruction from the Preſence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power.* Knoweſt thou not that every Sinner, ἔνοχός ἐστι τῇ γεέννῃ τοῦ πυρός; not properly *is in Danger of Hell-Fire,* that Expreſſion is far too weak: But rather, *is under the Sentence of Hell-Fire,* doom'd already, juſt dragging to Execution. Thou art guilty of everlaſting Death. It is the juſt Reward of thy Inward and Outward Wickedneſs. It is juſt, that the Sentence ſhould now take place. Doſt thou ſee, doſt thou feel this? Art thou throughly convinced, that thou deſerveſt God's Wrath and everlaſting Damnation? Would God do thee no wrong, if he now commanded the Earth to open and ſwallow thee up? if thou wert now to go down quick into the Pit, into the Fire that never ſhall be quenched? If God hath given thee truly to repent, thou haſt a deep Senſe that theſe Things are ſo; and that it is of his mere Mercy thou art not conſumed, ſwept away from the Face of the Earth.

5. And

5. And what wilt thou do to appeaſe the Wrath of God, to atone for all thy Sins, and to eſcape the Puniſhment thou haſt ſo juſtly deſerved? Alas, thou canſt do nothing: Nothing that will in any wiſe make amends to God, for one evil Work, or Word or Thought. If thou couldſt now do all Things well, if from this very Hour, till thy Soul ſhould return to God, thou couldſt perform perfect uninterrupted Obedience, even this would not atone for what is paſt. The not increaſing thy Debt would not diſcharge it. It would ſtill remain as great as ever. Yea, the preſent and future Obedience of all the Men upon Earth, and all the Angels in Heaven, would never make Satisfaction to the Juſtice of God for one ſingle Sin. How vain then was the Thought, of atoning for thy own Sins by any Thing thou could'ſt do? It coſteth far more to redeem one Soul, than all Mankind is able to pay. So that were there no other Help for a guilty Sinner, without Doubt he muſt have periſhed everlaſtingly.

6. But ſuppoſe perfect Obedience for the time to come, could atone for the Sins that are paſt, this would profit thee nothing; for thou art not able to perform it; no, not in any one Point. Begin now. Make the Trial. Shake off that outward Sin that ſo eaſily beſetteth thee. Thou canſt not. How then wilt thou change thy Life from all Evil to all Good? Indeed, it is impoſſible to be done, unleſs firſt thy Heart be changed. For ſo long as the Tree remains evil, it cannot bring forth good Fruit. But art thou able to change thy own Heart, from all Sin to all Holineſs? To quicken a Soul that is dead in Sin? Dead to God and alive only to the World? No more than

than thou art able to quicken a dead Body, to raiſe to Life him that lieth in the Grave. Yea, thou art not able to quicken thy Soul in any Degree, no more than to give any Degree of Life to the dead Body. Thou canſt do nothing more or leſs, in this Matter; thou art utterly without Strength. To be deeply ſenſible of this, how helpleſs thou art, as well as how guilty and how ſinful, this is that *Repentance not to be repented of*, which is the Fore-runner of the Kingdom of God.

7. If to this lively Conviction of thy inward and outward Sins, of thy utter Guiltineſs and Helpleſſneſs, there be added ſuitable Affections, Sorrow of Heart, for having deſpiſed thy own Mercies, Remorſe and Self-condemnation, having the Mouth ſtop'd, Shame, to lift up thine Eyes to Heaven; Fear of the Wrath of God abiding on thee, of his Curſe hanging over thy Head, and of the fiery Indignation ready to devour thoſe who forget God, and obey not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: Earneſt Deſire to eſcape from that Indignation, to ceaſe from evil and learn to do well: Then I ſay unto thee, in the Name of the Lord, *Thou art not far from the Kingdom of GOD.* One Step more and thou ſhalt enter in. Thou doſt *repent.* Now, *Believe the Goſpel.*

8. *The Goſpel* (that is, good Tidings, good News for guilty, helpleſs Sinners) in the largeſt Senſe of the Word, means, the whole Revelation made to Men by Jeſus Chriſt: And ſometimes the whole Account of what our Lord did and ſuffered, while he tabernacled among Men. The Subſtance of all is, *Jeſus Chriſt came into the World to ſave Sinners.* Or, *GOD ſo loved the World,*

World, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the End we might not periſh, but have everlaſting Life. Or, *he was bruiſed for our Tranſgreſſions, he was wounded for our Iniquities: The Chaſtiſement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are healed.*

9. Believe this and the Kingdom of GOD is thine. By Faith thou attaineſt the Promiſe. "He pardoneth and abſolveth all that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy Goſpel." As ſoon as ever GOD hath ſpoken to thy Heart, "Be of good Chear, thy Sins are forgiven thee," his Kingdom comes; thou haſt Righteouſneſs and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt.

10. Only beware thou do not deceive thy own Soul, with regard to the Nature of this Faith. It is not (as ſome have fondly conceived) a bare Aſſent to the Truth of the Bible, of the Articles of our Creed, or of all that is contained in the Old and New Teſtament. The Devils believe this, as well as I or thou? and yet they are Devils ſtill. But it is, over and above this, a ſure Truſt in the Mercy of God through Chriſt Jeſus. It is a Confidence in a pardoning God. It is a Divine Evidence or Conviction, that *GOD was in Chriſt reconciling the World to himſelf, not imputing to them their former Treſpaſſes:* And in particular, that the Son of GOD hath loved *me* and given himſelf for *me:* and that I, even I, am now reconciled to GOD by the Blood of the Croſs.

11. Doſt thou thus believe? Then the Peace of GOD is in thy Heart, and Sorrow and Sighing flee away. Thou art no longer in doubt of the Love of GOD: It is clear as the Noon-day Sun. Thou cryeſt out, *My Song ſhall be always of the Loving*

Loving Kindneſs of the Lord: with my Mouth will I ever be telling of my Truth, from one Generation to another. Thou art no longer afraid of Hell, or Death, or him that had once the Power of Death, the Devil: No, nor painfully afraid of GOD himſelf; only thou haſt a tender, filial Fear of offending him. Doſt thou believe? Then thy *Soul doth magnify the Lord, and thy Spirit rejoiceth in GOD thy Saviour.* Thou rejoiceſt in that thou haſt *Redemption thro' his Blood, even the Forgiveneſs of Sins.* Thou rejoiceſt in that *Spirit of Adoption, which crieth in thy Heart, Abba, Father!* Thou rejoiceſt in a *Hope full of Immortality,* in reaching forth unto the *Mark of the Prize of thy high Calling*; in an earneſt Expectation of all the good Things which GOD hath prepared for them that love him.

12. Doſt thou now believe? Then *the Love of GOD* is now *ſhed abroad in thy Heart.* Thou loveſt him, becauſe he firſt loved us. And becauſe thou loveſt GOD, thou loveſt thy Brother alſo. And being filled with *Love, Peace, Joy,* thou art alſo filled with *Long-ſuffering Gentleneſs, Fidelity, Goodneſs, Meekneſs, Temperance,* and all the other Fruits of the ſame Spirit: In a word, with whatever Diſpoſitions are holy, are heavenly or divine. For while thou *beholdeſt with open* uncover'd *Face,* (the Veil now being taken away) *the Glory of the Lord,* his glorious Love, and the glorious Image wherein thou waſt created, *thou art changed into the ſame Image, from Glory to Glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.*

13. This Repentance, this Faith, this Peace, Joy, Love; this Change from Glory to Glory, is what the Wiſdom of the World has voted to be

be Madneſs, mere Enthuſiaſm, utter Diſtraction. But thou, O Man of *GOD*, regard them not: Be thou moved by none of theſe things. Thou knoweſt in whom thou haſt believed. See that no Man take thy Crown. Whereunto thou haſt already attained hold faſt; and follow, till thou attain all the great and precious Promiſes. And thou who haſt not yet known him, let not vain Men make the aſhamed of the Goſpel of Chriſt. Be thou in nothing terrified by thoſe who ſpeak evil of the Things which they know not. GOD will ſoon turn thy Heavineſs into Joy. O let not thy Hands hang down. Yet a little longer, and he will take away thy Fears, and give thee the Spirit of a ſound Mind. *He is nigh that juſtifieth: Who is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt that died; yea rather that roſe again; who is even now at the Right-hand of GOD, making Interceſſion for thee.* Now caſt thyſelf on the Lamb of GOD, with all thy Sins, how many ſoever they be; and *an Entrance ſhall* now *be miniſtred unto* thee, *into the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt!*

The First-Fruits of the Spirit.

A

SERMON

On ROMANS viii. 1.

ROM. viii. 1.

There is therefore now no Condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus, who walk not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit.

1. BY *them which are in Chriſt Jeſus*, St. *Paul* evidently means, Thoſe who truly believe in him: Thoſe who *being juſtified by Faith, have Peace with God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* They who thus believe do no longer *walk after the Fleſh*, no longer follow the Motions of corrupt Nature: But *after the Spirit:* Both their Thoughts, Words and Works, are under the Direction of the bleſſed Spirit of GOD.

2. *There is therefore now no Condemnation to* theſe. There is no Condemnation to them from GOD: For he hath *juſtified* them *freely by his Grace, thro' the Redemption that is in Jeſus.* He hath forgiven all their Iniquities, and blotted out all their Sins. And there is no Condemnation to them from within: For they *have received, not the Spirit of the World, but the Spirit which is of GOD, that they might know the Things which are freely given to them of GOD*: Which Spirit beareth Witneſs with their Spirits, that they are the Children of GOD.* And to this is added, † *the Teſtimony of* their *Conſcience, that in Simpli-*

* 1 Cor. ii. 12. † 2 Cor. i. 12.

city

city and godly Sincerity, not with fleſhly Wiſdom, but by the Grace of GOD, they *have had* their *Converſation in the World.*

3. But becauſe this Scripture has been ſo frequently miſunderſtood, and that in ſo dangerous a Manner, becauſe ſuch Multitudes of *unlearned and unſtable Men,* (οἱ ἀμαθεῖς καὶ ἀστήρικτοι, Men untaught of God, and conſequently uneſtabliſh'd in *the Truth which is after Godlineſs)* have *wreſted* it *to their own Deſtruction.* I propoſe to ſhew as clearly as I can, Firſt, Who thoſe are *which are in Chriſt Jeſus, and walk not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit*; and Secondly, How *there is no Condemnation to* theſe. I ſhall conclude with ſome practical Inferences.

I. 1. Firſt. I am to ſhew, Who thoſe are that *are in Chriſt Jeſus.* And are they not, Thoſe who believe in his Name? Thoſe who are *found in him, not having* their *own Righteouſneſs, but the Righteouſneſs which is of GOD by Faith?* Theſe, who *have Redemption through his Blood,* are properly ſaid, to be *in Him.* For *they dwell in Chriſt and Chriſt in them.* They are *joined unto the Lord in one Spirit.* They are ingrafted into him as Branches into the Vine. They are united, as Members to their Head; in a manner which Words cannot expreſs, nor could it before enter into their Hearts to conceive.

2. Now *whoſoever abideth in him, ſinneth not; walketh not after the Fleſh.* The Fleſh, in the uſual Language of St. *Paul,* ſignifies corrupt Nature. In this Senſe, he uſes the Word, writing to the *Galatians. The Works of the Fleſh are manifeſt,* Gal. v. 19. And a little before, *Walk in the*

the Spirit, and ye ſhall not fulfil the Luſt (or Deſire) *of the Fleſh* (*v.* 16.) To prove which, namely, that thoſe who *walk by the Spirit, do not fulfil the Luſt of the Fleſh*, he immediately adds, *For the Fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit; but the Spirit luſteth againſt the Fleſh (for theſe are contrary to each other) that ye may not do the Things which ye would.* So the Words are literally tranſlated, (ἵνα μὴ ἃ ἂν θέλητε, ταῦτα ποιῆτε.) Not, *So that ye cannot do the Things that ye would*, as if the Fleſh overcame the Spirit: A Tranſlation which hath not only nothing to do with the Original Text of the Apoſtle, but likewiſe makes his whole Argument nothing worth, yea, aſſerts juſt the reverſe of what he is proving.

3. *They who are of Chriſt*, who *abide in him have crucified the Fleſh with its Affections and Luſts.* They abſtain from all thoſe Works of the Fleſh; from *Adultery and Fornication*, from *Uncleanneſs and Laſciviouſneſs*; from *Idolatry*, *Witchcraft*, *Hatred*, *Variance*; from *Emulations*, *Wrath*, *Strife*, *Sedition*, *Hereſies*, *Envyings*, *Murders*, *Drunkenneſs*, *Revellings:* From every Deſign, and Word and Work, to which the Corruption of Nature leads. Altho' they feel the Root of Bitterneſs in themſelves, yet are they endued with Power from on High, to trample it continually under Foot, ſo that it cannot *ſpring up to trouble them:* Inſomuch that every freſh Aſſault which they undergo, only gives them freſh Occaſion of Praiſe, of crying out, *Thanks be unto GOD, who giveth us the Victory, thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*

4. They now *walk after the Spirit*, both in their Hearts and Lives. They are taught of Him to love God and their Neighbour, with a Love

which is *as a Well of Water, ſpringing up into everlaſting Life.* And by Him they are led into every holy Deſire, into every divine and heavenly Temper, till every Thought which ariſes in their Heart is Holineſs unto the Lord.

5. They who *walk after the Spirit*, are alſo led by him, into all Holineſs of Converſation. Their Speech is *always in Grace, ſeaſon'd with Salt*, with the Love and Fear of God. *No corrupt Communication comes out of their Mouth, but* only *that which is good*; that which is *to the Uſe of edifying*, which is *meet to miniſter Grace to the Hearers.* And herein likewiſe do they exerciſe themſelves Day and Night, to do only the Things which pleaſe God: in all their outward Behaviour to follow Him, *who left us an Example that we might tread in his Steps:* In all their Intercourſe with their Neighbour to walk in Juſtice, Mercy and Truth; and *whatſoever they do*, in every Circumſtance of Life, to *do all to the Glory of GOD.*

6. Theſe are they who indeed *walk by the Spirit.* Being filled with Faith and with the Holy Ghoſt, they poſſeſs in their Hearts, and ſhew forth in their Lives, in the whole Courſe of their Words and Actions, the Genuine Fruits of the Spirit of God, namely, *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-ſuffering, Gentleneſs, Goodneſs, Fidelity, Meekneſs, Temperance*, and whatſoever elſe is lovely or praiſe-worthy. They *adorn in all Things the Goſpel of GOD our Saviour*; and give full Proof to all Mankind, that they are indeed actuated by the ſame Spirit, *which raiſed up Jeſus from the Dead.*

II. 1. I propoſed to ſhew, in the ſecond Place, How *there is no Condemnation to them, which are* thus *in Chriſt Jeſus*, and thus *walk, not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit.*

And, firſt, To Believers in Chriſt, walking thus, *there is no Condemnation* on account of their paſt Sins. GOD condemneth them not for any of theſe: They are as tho' they had never been. They are *caſt as a Stone into the Depth of the Sea*, and he remembreth them no more. GOD having *ſet forth his Son to be a Propitiation for them, thro' Faith in his Blood, hath declared* unto them *his Righteouſneſs, for the Remiſſion of the Sins that are paſt.* He layeth therefore none of theſe to their Charge; their Memorial is periſhed with them.

2. And there is no Condemnation in their own Breaſt; no Senſe of Guilt, or Dread of the Wrath of GOD. They *have the Witneſs in themſelves*; they are conſcious of their Intereſt in the Blood of Sprinkling. *They have not received again the Spirit of Bondage unto Fear*, unto Doubt and racking Uncertainty; but they *have received the Spirit of Adoption, crying in their Hearts, Abba, Father.* Thus being *juſtified by Faith, they have* the *Peace* of GOD ruling in their Hearts: Flowing from a continual Senſe of his pardoning Mercy, and *the Anſwer of a good Conſcience toward GOD.*

3. If it be ſaid, But ſometimes a Believer in Chriſt, may loſe his Sight of the Mercy of GOD; ſometimes ſuch Darkneſs may fall upon him, that he no longer ſees him that is inviſible, no longer feels that Witneſs in himſelf of his Part in the atoning Blood; and then he is inwardly con-

demn'd, he hath again *the Sentence of Death in himſelf:* I anſwer, ſuppoſing it ſo to be, ſuppoſing him not to ſee the Mercy of GOD, then he is not a Believer; for Faith implies Light; the Light of GOD ſhining upon the Soul. So far therefore as any one loſes this Light, he for the Time loſes his Faith. And no doubt a true Believer in Chriſt, may loſe the Light of Faith. And ſo far as this is loſt, he may for a Time fall again into Condemnation. But this is not the Caſe of them who now *are in Chriſt Jeſus*, who now believe in his Name. For ſo long as they believe and walk after the Spirit, neither GOD condemns them nor their own Heart.

5. They are not condemn'd, Secondly, for any Preſent Sins, for now tranſgreſſing the Commandments of GOD. For they do not tranſgreſs them; they do not *walk after the Fleſh but after the Spirit.* This is the continual Proof of their *Love of GOD, that they keep his Commandments:* Even as St. *John* bears witneſs, *Whoſoever is born of GOD doth not commit Sin. For his Seed remaineth in him, and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of GOD:* He cannot, ſo long as that Seed of GOD, that loving, holy Faith remaineth in him. So long as *he keepeth himſelf* herein *that wicked one toucheth him not.* Now it is evident, he is not condemn'd for the Sins which he doth not commit at all. They therefore who are thus *led by the Spirit, are not under the Law, (Gal.* v. 18.) Not under the Curſe or Condemnation of it; for it condemns none but thoſe who break it. Thus, that Law of GOD, *Thou ſhalt not ſteal*, condemns none but thoſe who do ſteal. Thus, *Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy*, con-

condemns thoſe only who do not keep it holy. But *againſt* the Fruits of the Spirit, *there is no Law*; (*v.* 23.) As the Apoſtle more largely declares, in thoſe memorable Words of his former Epiſtle to *Timothy*. *We know, that the Law is good, if a Man uſe it lawfully*; *Knowing this*, (if while he uſes the Law of GOD, in order either to convince or direct, he know and remember this) ὅτι δικαίῳ νόμος οὐ κεῖται. (Not, that the Law is not made for a righteous Man; but) *That the Law does not lie againſt a righteous Man:* It has no Force againſt him, no Power to condemn him) *but againſt the Lawleſs and Diſobedient, againſt the Ungodly and Sinners, againſt the Unholy and Profane — according to the glorious Goſpel, of the bleſſed GOD.* 1 *Tim.* i. 8, 9, 11.

6. They are not condemn'd, Thirdly, for Inward Sin, even tho' it does now remain. That the Corruption of Nature does ſtill remain, even in thoſe who are the Children of GOD by Faith, that they have in them the Seeds of Pride and Vanity, of Anger, Luſt and evil Deſire, yea, Sin of every Kind, is too plain to be denied, being Matter of daily Experience. And on this Account it is, That St. *Paul* ſpeaking to thoſe, whom he had juſt before witneſs'd to be**in Chriſt Jeſus* †, to have been *called of GOD into the Fellowſhip* (or Participation) *of his Son Jeſus Chriſt*, yet declares, *Brethren, I could not ſpeak unto you as unto Spiritual, but as unto Carnal; even as unto Babes in Chriſt* (1 *Cor.* iii. 1.) *Babes in Chriſt*— So we ſee they were *in Chriſt*; they were Believers in a low Degree. And yet how much of

* 1 Cor. i. 2. † *Ver.* 9.

Sin remain'd in them? Of that *carnal Mind*, which *is not ſubject to the Law of GOD?*

7. And yet, for all this, they are not condemned. Altho' they feel the Fleſh, the evil Nature in them, altho' they are more ſenſible day by day, that their *Heart is deceitful and deſperately wicked:* Yet ſo long as they do not yield thereto, ſo long as they give no Place to the Devil, ſo long as they maintain a continual War, with all Sin, with Pride, Anger, Deſire, ſo that the Fleſh hath not Dominion over them, but they ſtil *walk after the Spirit:* There is *no Condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus.* God is well-pleaſed with their ſincere, tho' imperfect Obedience: And they *have Confidence toward GOD*, knowing *they are his, by the Spirit which he hath given them.* 1 *John* iii. 24.

8. Nay, Fourthly, altho' they are continually convinced of Sin cleaving to all they do; altho' they are conſcious of not fulfilling the Perfect Law, either in their Thoughts, or Words, or Works; altho' they know they do not love the Lord their God, with all their Heart, and Mind, and Soul and Strength; altho' they feel more or leſs of Pride or Self-will, ſtealing in and mixing with their beſt Duties; altho' even in their more immediate Intercourſe with GOD, when they aſſemble themſelves with the great Congregation, and when they pour out their Souls in ſecret to him, who ſeeth all the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart, they are continually aſham'd of their wandring Thoughts, or of the Deadneſs and Dulneſs of their Affections: Yet there is no Condemnation to them ſtill, either from GOD or from their own Heart. The Conſideration of theſe manifold Defects only gives them a deeper Senſe,

Senſe, That they have always need of that Blood of Sprinkling, which ſpeaks for them in the Ears of God, and that Advocate with the Father *who ever liveth, to make Interceſſion for them.* So far are theſe from driving them away from him, in whom they have believed, that they rather drive them the cloſer to him, whom they feel the Want of every Moment. And at the ſame Time, the deeper Senſe they have of this Want, the more earneſt Deſire do they feel, and the more diligent they are, as they *have received the Lord Jeſus, ſo* to *walk in Him.*

9. They are not condemn'd, Fifthly, for *Sins of Infirmity*, as they are uſually called. (Perhaps it were adviſeable rather to call them *Infirmities*, that we may not ſeem to give any Countenance to Sin, or to extenuate it in any Degree, by thus coupling it with Infirmity. But if we muſt retain ſo ambiguous and dangerous an Expreſſion) by *Sins of Infirmity* I would mean, ſuch involuntary Failings, as the ſaying a Thing we believe True, tho' in fact it prove to be Falſe; or the Hurting our Neighbour, without knowing or deſigning it; perhaps when we deſign'd to do him Good. Tho' theſe are Deviations from the holy and acceptable and perfect Will of God, yet they are not properly Sins, nor do they bring any Guilt on the Conſcience of *them which are in Chriſt Jeſus.* They ſeparate not between God and them, neither intercept the Light of his Countenance; as being no ways inconſiſtent with their general Character, of *walking not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit.*

10. Laſtly, *There is no Condemnation* to them for any Thing whatever which it is not in their Power to help; whether it be of an inward or

outward Nature, and whether it be doing ſomething, or leaving ſomething undone. For Inſtance: The Lord's Supper is to be adminiſter'd. But you do not partake thereof. Why do you not; You are confin'd by Sickneſs. Therefore you cannot help omitting it: And for the ſame Reaſon, you are not condemned. There is no Guilt; becauſe there is no Choice. As there *is a willing Mind, it is accepted, according to that a Man hath, not according to that he hath not.*

11. A Believer indeed may ſometimes be *grieved*, becauſe he cannot do what his Soul longs for. He may cry out, when he is detain'd from worſhiping GOD in the great Congregation, *Like as the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks, ſo panteth my Soul after thee, O GOD. My Soul is athirſt for GOD, yea even for the living GOD: when ſhall I come to appear in the Preſence of GOD?* He may earneſtly deſire (only ſtill ſaying in his Heart, Not as I will, but as thou wilt) to *go again with the Multitude and bring them forth into the Houſe of GOD.* But ſtill, if he cannot go, he feels no Condemnation, no Guilt, no Senſe of GOD's Diſpleaſure: But can chearfully yield up thoſe Deſires, with, *O my Soul, put thy Truſt in GOD: For I will yet give him Thanks, who is the Help of my Countenance and my GOD.*

12. It is more difficult to determine concerning thoſe which are uſually ſtyled, *Sins of Surprize:* As when one who commonly in Patience poſſeſſes his Soul, on a ſudden and violent Temptation, ſpeaks or acts in a Manner not conſiſtent with the Royal Law, *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thyſelf.* Perhaps it is not eaſy to fix a General Rule, concerning Tranſgreſſions of this Nature. We cannot ſay, either that Men are,

or

or that they are not condemn'd, for Sins of Surprize in general. But it ſeems, whenever a Believer is by Surprize over-taken in a Fault, there is more or leſs Condemnation, as there is more or leſs Concurrence of his Will. In proportion as a ſinful Deſire or Word or Action is more or leſs voluntary, ſo we may conceive, God is more or leſs diſpleaſed, and there is more or leſs Guilt upon the Soul.

13. But if ſo, then there may be ſome Sins of Surprize, which bring much Guilt and Condemnation. For in ſome Inſtances, our being ſurprized is owing to ſome wilful and culpable Neglect; or to a Sleepineſs of Soul which might have been prevented, or ſhaken off before the Temptation came. A Man may be previouſly warned either of God or Man, That Trials and Danger are at hand: And yet may ſay in his Heart, *A little more Slumber, a little more Folding of the Hands to Reſt.* Now if ſuch an one afterwards fall, tho' unawares, into the Snare which he might have avoided; that he fell unawares is no Excuſe: He might have foreſeen, and have ſhun'd the Danger. The falling even by Surprize, in ſuch an Inſtance as this, is, in effect, a wilful Sin; and as ſuch muſt expoſe the Sinner to Condemnation, both from God and his own Conſcience.

14. On the other hand, there may be ſudden Aſſaults, either from the World, or the God of this World, and frequently from our own evil Hearts, which we did not, and hardly could foreſee. And by theſe even a Believer, while weak in Faith, may poſſibly be borne down, ſuppoſe into a Degree of Anger, or thinking evil of an-

other, with ſcarce any Concurrence of his Will. Now in ſuch a Caſe, the jealous GOD would undoubtedly ſhew him that he had done fooliſhly, He would be convinced of having ſwerved from the Perfect Law, from the Mind which was in Chriſt, and conſequently *grieved* with a godly Sorrow, and lovingly *aſhamed* before GOD. Yet need he not come into Condemnation. God layeth not Folly to his Charge, but hath Compaſſion upon him, *even as a Father pitieth his own Children.* And his Heart condemneth him not; in the midſt of that Sorrow and Shame, he can ſtill ſay, *I will truſt and not be afraid. For the Lord Jehovah is my Strength and my Song; he is alſo become my Salvation.*

III. 1. It remains only, to draw ſome practical Inferences from the preceding Conſiderations.

And, Firſt, If there be *no Condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus, and walk not after the Fleſh but after the Spirit,* on account of their paſt Sin: Then why art thou fearful, O thou of little Faith? Tho' thy Sins were once more in number than the Sand, what is that to thee now thou art in Chriſt Jeſus? *Who ſhall lay any thing to the Charge of GOD's Elect? It is GOD that juſtifieth: Who is he that condemneth?* All the Sins thou haſt committed from thy Youth up, until the Hour when thou waſt *accepted in the Beloved,* are driven away as Chaff, are gone, are loſt, ſwallowed up, remembered no more. Thou art now *born of the Spirit:* Wilt thou be troubled or afraid for what is done before thou wert born? Away with thy Fears! Thou art not called to Fear; but to the *Spirit of Love and of a ſound Mind.*

Mind. Know thy Calling. Rejoice in God thy Saviour, and give Thanks to God thy Father through him.

2. Wilt thou ſay, " But I have again committed Sin, ſince I had Redemption through his Blood? And therefore it is, that *I abhor myſelf, and repent in Duſt and Aſhes.*" It is meet thou ſhouldſt abhor thyſelf; and it is God who hath wrought thee to this ſelf-ſame Thing. But doſt thou now believe? Hath he again enabled thee to ſay, *I know that my Redeemer liveth: And the Life which I now live, I live by Faith in the Son of GOD?* Then that Faith again cancels all that is paſt, and there is no Condemnation to thee. At whatſoever Time thou truly believeſt in the Name of the Son of God, all thy Sins antecedent to that Hour, vaniſh away as the Morning Dew. Now then, *Stand thou faſt in the Liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made thee free.* He hath once more made thee free from the Power of Sin, as well as from the Guilt and Puniſhment of it. *O be not intangled again with the Yoke of Bondage!* Neither the vile deviliſh Bondage of Sin; of evil Deſires, evil Tempers, or Words or Works, the moſt grievous Yoke on this Side Hell: Nor the Bondage of ſlaviſh tormenting Fear, of Guilt and Self-condemnation.

3. But, Secondly: Do all they which abide *in Chriſt Jeſus, walk not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit?* Then we cannot but infer, that whoſoever now committeth Sin, hath no Part or Lot in this Matter. He is even now condemned by his own Heart. But *if our Heart condemn us*, if our own Conſcience beareth Witneſs that we are guilty, undoubtedly God doth: For *he is greater*

than our Heart, and knoweth all Things; ſo that we cannot deceive him, if we can ourſelves. And think not to ſay, "I was juſtified once; my Sins were once forgiven me." I know not that: Neither will I diſpute whether they were or no. Perhaps, at this Diſtance of time, 'tis next to impoſſible to know with any tolerable Degree of Certainty, whether that was a true, genuine Work of GOD, or whether thou didſt only deceive thy own Soul. But this I know with the utmoſt Degree of Certainty, *He that committeth Sin is of the Devil.* Therefore thou art of thy Father the Devil. It cannot be denied: For the Works of thy Father thou doſt. O flatter not thyſelf with vain Hopes. Say not to thy Soul, Peace, Peace! For there is no Peace. Cry aloud! Cry unto GOD out of the Deep; if haply he may hear thy Voice. Come unto him as at firſt, as wretched and poor, as ſinful, miſerable, blind and naked. And beware thou ſuffer thy Soul to take no Reſt, till his pardoning Love be again revealed, till he *heal thy Backſlidings*, and fill thee again with the *Faith that worketh by Love.*

4. Thirdly, Is there no Condemnation to them which *walk after the Spirit*, by reaſon of *inward Sin* ſtill remaining, ſo long as they do not give way thereto; nor by reaſon of *Sin cleaving* to all they do? Then fret not thy ſelf becauſe of Ungodlineſs, tho' it ſtill remain in thy Heart. Repine not, becauſe thou ſtill comeſt ſhort of the glorious Image of GOD: Nor yet, becauſe Pride Self-will, or Unbelief, cleave to all thy Words and Works. And be not afraid to know all the Evil of thy Heart, to know thyſelf as alſo thou art known. Yea, deſire of GOD, that thou mayſt

not think of thyſelf more highly than thou oughteſt to think. Let thy continual Prayer be,

" Shew me, as my Soul can bear,
The Depth of inbred Sin:
All the Unbelief declare,
The Pride that lurks within !"

But when he heareth thy Prayer, and unveils thy Heart, when he ſhews thee throughly what Spirit thou art of: Then beware that thy Faith fail thee not, that thou ſuffer not thy Shield to be torn from thee. Be abaſed. Be humbled in the Duſt. See thyſelf nothing, leſs than Nothing and Vanity. But ſtill, *let not* thy *Heart be troubled*, neither *let it be afraid.* Still hold faſt, " *I*, even I, *have an Advocate with the Father*, *Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous.* And as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, ſo is his Love higher than even my Sins." —Therefore GOD is merciful to thee a Sinner! Such a Sinner as thou art! GOD is Love; and Chriſt hath died. Therefore the Father himſelf loveth thee. Thou art his Child. Therefore he will with-hold from thee no manner of thing that is good. Is it good, that the whole Body of Sin, which is now crucified in thee, ſhould be deſtroyed? It ſhall be done. Thou ſhalt be *cleanſed from all Filthineſs both of Fleſh and Spirit.* Is it good, that nothing ſhould remain in thy Heart, but the pure Love of GOD alone? Be of good Chear! *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy GOD, with all thy Heart and Mind and Soul and Strength. Faithful is he that hath promiſed, who alſo will do it.* It is thy part, patiently to continue in the Work of Faith, and in the

the Labour of Love: And in chearful Peace, in humble Confidence, with calm and reſigned, and yet earneſt Expectation, to wait till *the Zeal of the Lord of Hoſts ſhall perform this.*

5. Fourthly, If they that *are in Chriſt, and walk after the Spirit*, are not condemn'd for *Sins of Infirmity*, as neither for *involuntary Failings*, nor for any Thing whatever which they are not able to help: Then beware, O thou that haſt Faith in his Blood, that Satan herein *gain no Advantage over thee.* Thou art ſtill fooliſh and weak, blind and ignorant: More weak than any Words can expreſs, more fooliſh than it can yet enter into thy Heart to conceive, knowing nothing yet as thou oughteſt to know. Yet let not all thy Weakneſs and Folly, or any Fruit thereof, which thou art not yet able to avoid, ſhake thy Faith, thy filial Truſt in GOD, or diſturb thy Peace or Joy in the Lord. The Rule which ſome give as to wilful Sins, and which in that Caſe, may perhaps be dangerous, is undoubtedly wiſe and ſafe, if it be applied only to the Caſe of Weakneſs and Infirmities. Art thou fallen, O Man of GOD? Yet do not lie there, fretting thyſelf and bemoaning thy Weakneſs: But meekly ſay, Lord, I ſhall fall thus every Moment, unleſs thou uphold me with thy Hand. And then ariſe! Leap and walk. Go on thy way. *Run with Patience the Race ſet before thee.*

6. Laſtly, Since a Believer need not come into Condemnation, even tho' he be *ſurprized* into what his Soul abhors, (ſuppoſe his being ſurprized is not owing to any Careleſſneſs or wilful Neglect of his own:) If thou who believeſt, art thus overtaken in a Fault, then grieve unto the Lord; it

ſhall be a precious Balm: Pour out thy Heart before him, and ſhew him of thy Trouble. And pray with all thy Might to him who is *touched with the Feeling of* thy *Infirmities*, that he would ſtabliſh and ſtrengthen and ſettle thy Soul, and ſuffer thee to fall no more. But ſtill he condemneth thee not. Wherefore ſhould'ſt thou fear? Thou haſt no Need of any *Fear that hath Torment*. Thou ſhalt love him that loveth thee, and it ſufficeth: More Love will bring more Strength. And as ſoon as thou loveſt him with all thy Heart, thou ſhalt be *perfect and entire, lacking nothing*. Wait in Peace for that Hour, when *the GOD of Peace* ſhall *ſanctify thee wholly, ſo that thy whole Spirit, and Soul and Body may be preſerved blameleſs unto the Coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt!*

The

The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption.

A

SERMON

On ROMAMS viii. 15.

ROM. viii. 15.

Ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again unto Fear: But ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

1. ST. *PAUL* here ſpeaks to thoſe who are the Children of GOD by Faith. Ye, ſaith he, who are indeed his Children, have drank into his Spirit. *Ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again unto Fear.* But *becauſe ye are Sons, GOD hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts. Ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

2. The Spirit of Bondage and Fear is widely diſtant from this loving Spirit of Adoption. Thoſe who are influenced only by ſlaviſh Fear, cannot be term'd, The Sons of God. Yet ſome of them may be ſtyled his Servants, and are *not far from the Kingdom of Heaven.*

3. But it is to be fear'd, the Bulk of Mankind, yea, of what is call'd *The Chriſtian World*, have not attain'd even this; but are ſtill afar off, *neither is GOD in all their Thoughts.* A few Names may be found of thoſe who love GOD: A few more there are that fear him. But the greater Part have neither the Fear of GOD before their Eyes, nor the Love of GOD in their Hearts.

4. Per-

4. Perhaps moſt of you, who by the Mercy of GOD, now partake of a better Spirit, may remember the Time, when ye were as they, when ye were under the ſame Condemnation. But at firſt ye knew it not, tho' ye were wallowing daily in your Sins and in your Blood: Till in due time ye *received the Spirit of Fear* (*ye received*; for this alſo is the Gift of GOD:) And afterwards, Fear vaniſh'd away, and the Spirit of Love fill'd your Hearts.

5. One who is in the firſt State of Mind, without Fear or Love, is in Scripture term'd *a natural Man*. One who is under the Spirit of Bondage and Fear, is ſometimes ſaid to be *under the Law:* (Altho' that Expreſſion more frequently ſignifies One, who is under the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation, who thinks himſelf obliged to obſerve all the Rites and Ceremonies of the *Jewiſh Law.*) But one who has exchanged the Spirit of Fear for the Spirit of Love, is properly ſaid, To be *under Grace.*

Now becauſe it highly imports us, to know what Spirit we are of, I ſhall endeavour to point out diſtinctly, Firſt, The State of a *natural Man*, Secondly, That of one who is *under the Law*, and Thirdly, of one who is *under Grace.*

I. 1. And, Firſt, the State of a *natural Man.* This the Scripture repreſents as a State of Sleep. The Voice of GOD to him is, *Awake, thou that ſleepeſt.* For his Soul is in a deep Sleep. His Spiritual Senſes are not awake: They diſcern neither Spiritual Good nor Evil. The Eyes of his Underſtanding are cloſed; they are ſealed together, and ſee not. Clouds and Darkneſs continually reſt

reſt upon them; for he lies in the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Hence having no Inlets for the Knowledge of Spiritual Things, all the Avenues of his Soul being ſhut up, he is in groſs, ſtupid Ignorance of whatever he is moſt concern'd to know. He is utterly ignorant of GOD, knowing nothing concerning him as he ought to know. He is totally a Stranger to the Law of GOD, as to its True, Inward, Spiritual Meaning. He has no Conception of that Evangelical Holineſs, without which no Man ſhall ſee the Lord; nor of the Happineſs, which they only find, whoſe *Life is hid with Chriſt in GOD.*

2. And for this very Reaſon, becauſe he is faſt *aſleep*, he is, in ſome Senſe, at *Reſt.* Becauſe he is *blind*, he is alſo *ſecure:* He ſaith, *Tuſh, there ſhall no Harm happen unto me.* The Darkneſs which covers him on every Side, keeps him in a kind of Peace: (So far as Peace can conſiſt with the Works of the Devil, and with an earthly, ſenſiſh Mind.) He *ſees* not that he ſtands on the Edge of the Pit; therefore he *fears* it not. He cannot *tremble* at the Danger he does not *know.* He has not Underſtanding enough to fear. Why is it that he is in no Dread of GOD? Becauſe he is totally ignorant of him: If not *ſaying in his Heart, There is no GOD*, or, that he *ſitteth in the Circle of the Heavens, and humbleth* not *himſelf to behold the Things* which are done on Earth; yet ſatisfying himſelf as well, to all *Epicurean* Intents and Purpoſes, by ſaying, "GOD is Merciful:" Confounding and ſwallowing up at once, in that unweildy Idea of Mercy, all his Holineſs and Eſſential Hatred of Sin, all his Juſtice, Wiſdom and Truth. He is in no Dread

of

of the Vengeance denounced againſt thoſe who obey not the bleſſed Law of God, becauſe he underſtands it not. He imagines the main Point is, To *do thus*, to be *outwardly* blameleſs: And ſees not that it extends to every Temper, Deſire, Thought, Motion of the Heart. Or he fancies, that the Obligation hereto is ceas'd; that Chriſt came to *deſtroy the Law and the Prophets*; to ſave his People *in*, not *from* their Sins; to bring them to Heaven, without Holineſs. Notwithſtanding his own Words, *Not one Jot or Tittle of the Law ſhall paſs away, till all Things are fulfilled:* And, *Not every one that ſaith unto me, Lord, Lord! ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven.*

3. He is ſecure, becauſe he is utterly ignorant of himſelf. Hence he talks of "repenting by and by;" he does not indeed exactly know when, but ſome time or other before he dies: Taking it for granted, That this is quite in his own Power. For what ſhould hinder his doing it, if he will? If he does but once ſet a Reſolution, no fear but he will make it good.

4. But this Ignorance never ſo ſtrongly glares as in thoſe who are term'd, *Men of Learning*. If a Natural Man be one of theſe, he can talk at large of his Rational Faculties; of the Freedom of his Will, and the abſolute Neceſſity of ſuch Freedom, in order to conſtitute Man a Moral Agent. He reads and argues, and proves to Demonſtration, That every Man may do as he will; may diſpoſe his own Heart to Evil or Good as it ſeems beſt in his own Eyes. Thus the God of this World ſpreads a double Veil of Blindneſs

over his Heart, leſt by any Means *the Light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt ſhould ſhine* upon it.

5. From the ſame Ignorance of himſelf and God there may ſometimes ariſe in the Natural Man a kind of *Joy*, in congratulating himſelf, upon his own Wiſdom and Goodneſs. And what the World calls Joy, he may often poſſeſs. He may have Pleaſure in various Kinds; either in gratifying the Deſires of the Fleſh, or the Deſire of the Eye, or the Pride of Life: Particularly if he has large Poſſeſſions; if he enjoy an affluent Fortune. Then he may *cloath* himſelf *in Purple and fine Linen, and fare ſumptuouſly every Day.* And *ſo long as* he thus *doth well unto himſelf, Men will* doubtleſs *ſpeak good of* him. They will ſay, He is a happy Man: For indeed this is the Sum of Worldly Happineſs: To dreſs, and viſit, and talk, and eat, and drink, and riſe up to play.

6. It is not ſurprizing, if one in ſuch Circumſtances as theſe, dozed with the Opiates of Flattery and Sin, ſhould imagine, among his other waking Dreams, That he walks in great *Liberty*. How eaſily may he perſuade himſelf, that he is at Liberty from all *Vulgar Errors*, and from the *Prejudice* of Education, judging exactly right, and keeping clear of all Extremes. "I am free (may he ſay) from all the *Enthuſiaſm* of weak and narrow Souls: From *Superſtition*, the Diſeaſe of Fools and Cowards, always righteous over much; and from *Bigotry*, continually incident to thoſe who have not a free and generous Way of Thinking." And too ſure it is, That he is altogether free, from the *Wiſdom which cometh from Above*, from Holineſs, from the Religion of the Heart, from the whole Mind which was in Chriſt.

7. For

7. For all this Time, he is the Servant of Sin. He commits Sin, more or leſs, day by day. Yet he is not troubled: He "is in no Bondage;" (as ſome ſpeak) he feels no Condemnation. He contents himſelf, (even tho' he ſhould profeſs to believe, that the Chriſtian Revelation is of GOD?" with, "Man is frail. We are all weak. Every Man has his Infirmity." Perhaps he quotes Scripture: "Why, does not *Solomon* ſay, "The Righteous Man falls into Sin ſeven times a day?" And doubtleſs, they are all Hypocrites or Enthuſiaſts who pretend to be better than their Neighbours." If at any time a ſerious Thought fix upon him, he ſtifles it as ſoon as poſſible, with, "Why ſhould I fear, ſince God is merciful, and Chriſt died for Sinners?" Thus he remains a willing Servant of Sin, content with the Bondage of Corruption; inwardly and outwardly unholy, and ſatisfied therewith; not only not conquering Sin, but not ſtriving to conquer, particularly That Sin, which doth ſo eaſily beſet him.

8. Such is the State of every *Natural Man*; whether he be a groſs, ſcandalous Tranſgreſſor, or a more reputable and decent Sinner, having the Form, tho' not the Power of Godlineſs. But how can ſuch an one be *convinced of Sin?* How is he brought to *repent?* To be *under the Law?* To receive the *Spirit of Bondage unto Fear?* This is the Point which is next to be conſider'd.

II. 1. By ſome awful Providence, or by his Word applied with the Demonſtration of his Spirit, GOD touches the Heart of him that lay aſleep in Darkneſs and in the Shadow of Death. He is ter-

terribly ſhaken out of his Sleep, and awakes into a Conſciouſneſs of his Danger. Perhaps in a Moment, perhaps by Degrees, the Eyes of his Underſtanding are opened, and now firſt (the Veil being in Part removed) diſcern the real State he is in. Horrid Light breaks in upon his Soul; ſuch Light, as may be conceived to gleam from the bottomleſs Pit, from the loweſt Deep, from a Lake of Fire, burning with Brimſtone. He at laſt ſees the Loving, the Merciful God, is alſo *a conſuming Fire*; that he is a juſt GOD and a terrible, rendering to every Man according to his Works, entering into Judgment with the Ungodly for every idle Word, yea, and for the Imaginations of the Heart. He now clearly perceives, that the great and holy GOD is *of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity*; that he is an Avenger of every one who rebelleth againſt him, and repayeth the Wicked to his Face; and that *it is a fearful thing, to fall into the Hands of the living GOD.*

3. The Inward, Spiritual Meaning of the Law of GOD now begins to glare upon him. He perceives the *Commandment is exceeding broad*, and *there is nothing hid from the Light thereof.* He is convinced, that every Part of it relates not barely to outward Sin or Obedience, but to what paſſes in the ſecret Receſſes of the Soul, which no Eye but GOD's can penetrate. If he now hears, *Thou ſhalt not kill*, GOD ſpeaks in Thunder, *He that hateth his Brother is a Murtherer.* He that ſaith unto his Brother, *Thou Fool, is obnoxious to Hell-fire.* If the Law ſay, *Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery*, the Voice of the Lord ſounds in his Ears, *He that looketh on a Woman, to luſt after her, hath committed Adultery with her already in his*

Heart. And thus in every Point, he feels the Word of GOD *quick and powerful, ſharper than a two-edged Sword.* It pierces even *to the dividing aſunder of* his *Soul and Spirit,* his *Joints and Marrow.* And ſo much the more, becauſe he is conſcious to *himſelf* of having neglected ſo great Salvation; of having *trodden under Foot the Son of GOD,* who would have ſaved him from his Sins, and *counted the Blood of the Covenant au unholy,* a common, unſanctifying *Thing.*

4. And as he knows *all Things are naked and opened unto the Eyes of him with whom we have to do,* ſo he ſees himſelf, naked, ſtript of all the Fig-leaves which he had ſewed together, of all his poor Pretences to Religion or Virtue, and his wretched Excuſes for ſinning againſt GOD. He now ſees himſelf, like the ancient Sacrifices, τέλεα-χηλισμένον, cleft in ſunder, as it were, from the Neck downward, ſo that all within him ſtands confeſt. His Heart is bare, and he ſees it is all Sin, *deceitful above all things, deſperately wicked;* that it is altogether corrupt and abominable, more than it is poſſible for Tongue to expreſs: that there dwelleth therein no good thing, but Unrighteouſneſs and Ungodlineſs only; every Motion thereof, every Temper and Thought, being only Evil continually.

5. And he not only ſees, but feels in himſelf, by an Emotion of Soul which he cannot deſcribe, that for the Sins of his Heart, were his Life without Blame, (which yet it is not, and cannot be ſeeing *an evil Tree cannot bring forth good Fruit*) he deſerves to be caſt into *the Fire that never ſhall be quenched.* He feels, that the *Wages,* the juſt Reward *of Sin,* of his Sin above all, *is Death*

even the Second Death, the Death which dieth not, the Deſtruction of Body in Soul and Hell.

6. Here ends his pleaſing Dream, his deluſive Reſt, his falſe Peace, his vain Security. His Joy now vaniſhes as a Cloud: Pleaſures, once loved, delight no more. They pall upon the Taſte; he loaths the nauſeous Sweet; he is weary to bear them. The Shadows of Happineſs flee away, and ſink into Oblivion. So that he is ſtript of all, and wanders to and fro, ſeeking Reſt, but finding none.

7. The Fumes of thoſe Opiates being now diſpelled, he feels the Anguiſh of a wounded Spirit. He finds that Sin let looſe upon the Soul (whether it be Pride, Anger, or Evil Deſire, whether Self-will, Malice, Envy, Revenge, or any other) is perfect Miſery. He feels Sorrow of Heart for the Bleſſings he has loſt, and the Curſe which is come upon him; Remorſe for having thus deſtroy'd himſelf, and deſpiſed his own Mercies; Fear, from a lively Senſe of the Wrath of GOD, and of the Conſequences of his Wrath; of the Puniſhment which he has juſtly deſerved, and which he ſees hanging over his Head; Fear of Death, as being to him the Gate of Hell, the Entrance of Death eternal; Fear of the Devil, the Executioner of the Wrath and righteous Vengeance of GOD; Fear of Men, who if they were able to kill his Body, would thereby plunge both Body and Soul into Hell; Fear, ſometimes ariſing to ſuch a Heighth, that the poor, ſinful, guilty Soul, is terrified with every thing, with Nothing, with Shades, with a Leaf ſhaken of the Wind. Yea ſometimes it may even border upon Diſtraction, making a Man *drunken, tho' not with Wine*, ſuſ-

pending the Exerciſe of the Memory, of the Underſtanding, of all the Natural Faculties. Sometimes it may approach to the very Brink of Deſpair: So that he who trembles at the Name of Death, may yet be ready to plunge into it every Moment, to *chuſe ſtrangling rather than Life.* Well may ſuch a Man *roar*, like him of old, *for the very Diſquietneſs of* his *Heart.* Well may he cry out, *The Spirit of a Man may ſuſtain his Infirmities; but a wounded Spirit who can bear?*

8. Now he truly deſires to break looſe from Sin, and begins to ſtruggle with it. But tho' he ſtrive with all his Might, he cannot conquer; Sin is mightier than he. He would fain eſcape; but he is ſo faſt in Priſon, that he cannot get forth. He reſolves againſt Sin, but yet ſins on: He ſees the Snare, and abhors, and runs into it. So much does his boaſted Reaſon avail! Only to inhance his Guilt, and increaſe his Miſery. Such is the Freedom of his Will! Free only to Evil; free to *drink in Iniquity like Water*; to wander farther and farther from the living GOD, and do more *Deſpight to the Spirit of Grace!*

9. The more he ſtrives, wiſhes, labours to be free, the more does he feel his Chains, the grievous Chains of Sin, wherewith Satan binds and *leads him Captive at his Will:* His Servant he is, tho' he repine ever ſo much; tho' he rebel, he cannot prevail. He is ſtill in Bondage and Fear, by reaſon of Sin: Generally, of ſome outward Sin, to which he is peculiarly diſpos'd, either by Nature, Cuſtom or Outward Circumſtances; But always, of ſome inward Sin, ſome evil Temper or unholy Affection. And the more he frets againſt it, the more it prevails; he may bite, but

cannot break his Chain. Thus he toils without End, repenting and ſinning, and repenting and ſinning again, till at length the poor ſinful, helpleſs Wretch is even at his Wit's End, and can barely groan, *O wretched Man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the Body of this Death?*

10. This whole Struggle of one who is *under the Law*, under the *Spirit of Fear and Bondage*, is beautifully deſcribed by the Apoſtle in the foregoing Chapter, ſpeaking in the Perſon of an awaken'd Man. *I* (ſaith he) *was alive without the Law once*, ver. 9. I had much Life, Wiſdom, Strength and Virtue; ſo I thought: *But when the Commandment came, Sin revived, and I died.* When the Commandment, in its ſpiritual Meaning, came to my Heart, with the Power of GOD, my Inbred Sin was ſtirred up, fretted, inflamed, and all my Virtue died away. *And the Commandment, which was ordained to Life, I found to be unto Death. For Sin, taking occaſion by the Commandment, deceived me, and by it ſlew me*, ver. 10, 11. It came upon me unawares, ſlew all my Hopes, and plainly ſhewed, in the midſt of Life I was in Death. *Wherefore the Law is holy, and the Commandment, holy and juſt and good*, ver. 12. I no longer lay the Blame on this, but on the Corruption of my own Heart. I acknowledge that *the Law is Spiritual: but I am carnal, ſold under Sin*, ver. 14. I now ſee th the Spiritual Nature of the Law, and my own carnal, deviliſh Heart; *ſold under Sin*, totally inſlaved: (like Slaves bought with Money, who were abſolutely at their Maſter's Diſpoſal.) *For that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, I do not; but what I hate, that I do*, ver. 15. Such is the Bondage under which

I groan; ſuch the Tyranny of my hard Maſter. *To will is preſent with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the Good that I would, I do not; but the Evil which I would not, that I do*, ver. 18, 19. *I find a Law*, an inward conſtraining Power, *that when I would do good, Evil is preſent with me. For I delight in* (or conſent to) *the Law of GOD, after the inward Man:* (ver. 21, 22.) In my Mind: So the Apoſtle explains himſelf in the Words that immediately follow; and ſo ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος, *the inward Man*, is underſtood in all other *Greek* Writers.) *But I ſee another Law in my Members*, another conſtraining Power, *warring againſt the Law of my Mind*, or inward Man, *and bringing me into Captivity to the Law*, or Power, *of Sin*, ver. 23. dragging me as it were at my Conqueror's Chariot-wheels, into the very thing which my Soul abhors. *O wretched Man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the Body of this Death!* ver. 24. Who ſhall deliver me from this helpleſs, dying Life; from this Bondage of Sin and Miſery! Till this is done, *I myſelf* (or rather, *that I*, αὐτὸς ἐγὼ, *that Man* I am now perſonating) *with the Mind*, or inward Man, *ſerve the Law of GOD*; my Mind, my Conſcience is on GOD's Side: *But with the Fleſh*; with my Body, *the Law of Sin*, ver. 25. being hurried away by a Force I cannot reſiſt.

11. How lively a Portraiture is this of one *under the Law!* One who feels the Burthen he cannot ſhake off; who pants after Liberty, Power and Love, but is in Fear and Bondage ſtill! Until the Time that GOD anſwers the wretched Man, crying out, *Who ſhall deliver me?* from this Bondage of Sin, from this Body of Death?

Death? *The Grace of GOD, through Jeſus Chriſt thy Lord.*

III. 1. Then it is, that this miſerable Bondage ends, and he is no more *under the Law, but under Grace.* This State we are Thirdly to conſider, the State of one who has found *Grace* or Favour, in the Sight of GOD, even the Father, and who has the *Grace*, or Power of the Holy Ghoſt, reigning in his Heart: Who has receiv'd, in the Language of the Apoſtle, *the Spirit of Adoption, whereby* he now *cries, Abba, Father!*

2. *He cried unto the Lord in his Trouble, and* GOD *delivers him out of his Diſtreſs.* His Eyes are open'd in quite another manner than before, even to ſee a loving, gracious GOD. While he is calling, *I beſeech thee ſhew me thy Glory*, he hears a Voice in his inmoſt Soul, *I will make all my Goodneſs paſs before thee, and I will proclaim the Name of the Lord: I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will ſhew Mercy to whom I will ſhew Mercy.* And it is not long before *the Lord deſcends in the Cloud, and proclaims the Name of the Lord.* Then he ſees, (but not with Eyes of Fleſh and Blood) *The Lord, the Lord GOD: Merciful and gracious, Long-ſuffering, and abundant in Goodneſs and Truth: Keeping Mercy for thouſands, and forgiving Iniquities and Tranſgreſſion and Sin.*

3. Heavenly, healing Light now breaks in upon his Soul. He *looks on him whom he had pierced*, and *GOD who out of Darkneſs commanded Light to ſhine, ſhineth in* his *Heart.* He *ſees the Light of the* glorious Love *of GOD, in the Face of Jeſus Chriſt.* He hath a divine *Evidence of Things not ſeen* by Senſe, even of *the deep Things of GOD*;

More particularly of the Love of GOD, of his pardoning Love to him that believes in Jesus. Overpowered with the Sight, his whole Soul cries out, *My Lord, and my GOD!* For he sees all his Iniquities laid on him, who *bare them in his own Body on the Tree:* He beholds the Lamb of GOD taking away his Sins. How clearly now does he discern, that *God was in Christ, reconciling the World unto himself! Making him Sin for us, who knew no Sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of GOD through him!* And that he himself is reconciled to GOD, by that Blood of the Covenant!

4. Here end both the Guilt and Power of Sin. He can now say, *I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the Life which I now live in the Flesh,* even in this mortal Body, *I live by Faith in the Son of GOD, who loved me and gave himself for me.* Here end Remorse and Sorrow of Heart, and the Anguish of a wounded Spirit. *GOD turneth his Heaviness into Joy.* He *made sore,* and now *his Hands bind up.* Here ends also that Bondage unto Fear; for *his Heart standeth fast, believing in the Lord.* He cannot fear any longer the Wrath of GOD; for he knows it is now turn'd away from him, and looks upon him no more as an angry Judge, but as a loving Father. He cannot fear the Devil, knowing he has *no Power, except it be given him from Above.* He fears not Hell, being an Heir of the Kingdom of Heaven; consequently, he has no Fear of Death; by reason whereof he was in time past, for so many Years *subject to Bondage.* Rather, knowing that *if the earthly House of this Tabernacle be dissolved,* he

he *hath a Building of GOD, a Houſe not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens: He groaneth earneſtly, deſiring to be cloathed upon, with that Houſe which is from Heaven.* He groans to ſhake off this Houſe of Earth, that *Mortality* may be *ſwallowed up of Life:* Knowing that *GOD hath wrought him for the ſelf ſame thing; who hath alſo given him the Earneſt of his Spirit.*

5. And *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty*; Liberty not only from Guilt and Fear, but from Sin, from that heavieſt of all Yokes, that baſeſt of all Bondage. His Labour is not now in vain. The Snare is broken and he is delivered. He not only ſtrives, but likewiſe prevails; he not only fights, but conquers alſo. *Henceforth he doth not ſerve Sin (Chap. vi. ver. 6, &c.) He is dead unto Sin and alive unto GOD. Sin doth not* now *reign*, even *in his mortal Body*, nor doth he *obey it in the Deſires thereof.* He does not *yield his Members as Inſtruments of Unrighteouſneſs unto Sin, but as Inſtruments of Righteouſneſs unto GOD.* For *being now made free from Sin, he is become the Servant of Righteouſneſs.*

6. Thus *having Peace with GOD, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, rejoicing in Hope of the Glory of GOD*, and having Power over all Sin, over every evil Deſire, and Temper, and Word, and Work, he is a living Witneſs of the *glorious Liberty of the Sons of GOD:* All of whom, being Partakers of *like precious Faith*, bear Record with one Voice, *We have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father!*

7. It is this Spirit which continually *worketh in them, both to will and to do of his good Pleaſure.* It is he that ſheds the Love of GOD abroad in

their Hearts, and the Love of all Mankind; thereby purifying their Hearts from the Love of the World, from the Luſt of the Fleſh, the Luſt of the Eye, and the Pride of Life. It is by him they are delivered from Anger and Pride, from all vile and inordinate Affections. In conſequence, they are delivered from evil Words and Works, from all unholineſs of Converſation: doing no evil to any Child of Man, and being zealous of all good Works.

8. To ſum up all. The *Natural* Man neither fears nor loves GOD; one *under the Law*, fears; one *under Grace*, loves him. The Firſt, has no Light in the Things of GOD, but walks in utter Darkneſs; The Second ſees the painful Light of Hell; The Third, the joyous Light of Heaven. He that ſleeps in Death, has a falſe Peace. He that is awakened has no Peace at all. He that believes has true Peace, the Peace of GOD filling and ruling his Heart. The Heathen, baptized or unbaptized, hath a fancied Liberty, which is indeed Licentiouſneſs: The *Jew* (or one under the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation) is in heavy, grievous Bondage: The Chriſtian enjoys the true glorious Liberty of the Sons of GOD. An unawakened Child of the Devil, ſins willingly: One that is awakened ſins unwillingly: A Child of GOD *ſinnethnot*, but *keepeth himſelf, and the wicked one toucheth him not.* To conclude; the Natural Man neither conquers nor fights; the Man under the Law fights with Sin, but cannot conquer: The Man under Grace fights and conquers, yea is *more than Conquerer, through him that loveth him.*

IV.

IV. 1. From this plain Account of the three-fold State of Man, the *Natural*, the *Legal*, and the *Evangelical*, it appears, that it is not ſufficient, to divide Mankind, into Sincere and Inſincere. A Man may be ſincere in any of theſe States; not only when he has the *Spirit of Adoption*, but while he has the *Spirit of Bondage unto Fear*. Yea, while he has neither this Fear, nor Love. For undoubtedly there may be ſincere Heathens, as well as ſincere *Jews* or Chriſtians. This Circumſtance then, does by no means prove, that a Man is in a State of Acceptance with GOD.

Examine yourſelves therefore, not only whether ye are ſincere, *but whether ye be in the Faith*. Examine narrowly; for it imports you much. What is the ruling Principle in your Soul? Is it the Love of GOD? Is it the Fear of GOD? Or is it neither one nor the other? It is not rather, the Love of the World? the Love of Pleaſure? or Gain? of Eaſe? or Reputation? If ſo, you are not come ſo far as a *Jew*. You are but a *Heathen* ſtill. Have you Heaven in your Heart? Have you the Spirit of Adoption, ever crying, *Abba, Father?* Or do you cry unto GOD, as *out of the Belly of Hell*, overwhelmed with Sorrow and Fear? Or are you a Stranger to this whole Affair, and cannot imagine what I mean? Heathen, pull off the Maſk. Thou haſt never put on Chriſt. Stand barefaced. Look up to Heaven. And own before him that liveth for ever and ever, thou haſt no Part either among the Sons or Servants of GOD.

Whoſoever thou art, Doſt thou commit Sin, or doſt thou not? If thou doſt, is it willingly or unwillingly? In either Caſe GOD hath told thee whoſe thou art, *He that committeth Sin is of the Devil.* If thou committeſt it willingly, thou art his faithful Servant. He will not fail to reward thy Labour. If unwillingly, ſtill thou art his Servant. GOD deliver thee out of his Hands!

Art thou daily fighting againſt all Sin? and daily more than Conqueror? I acknowledge thee for a Child of GOD. O ſtand faſt in thy glorious Liberty. Art thou fighting, but not conquering; ſtriving for the Maſtery, but not able to attain? Then thou art not yet a Believer in Chriſt; but follow on; and thou ſhalt know the Lord. Art thou not fighting at all, but leading an eaſy, indolent, faſhionable Life? O how haſt thou dared to name the Name of Chriſt? Only to make it a Reproach among the Heathen? Awake thou Sleeper! Call upon thy GOD: Before the Deep ſwallow thee up.

2. Perhaps one Reaſon why ſo many think of themſelves more highly than they ought to think, why they do not diſcern what State they are in, is, becauſe theſe ſeveral States of Soul, are often mingled together, and in ſome meaſure meet, in one and the ſame Perſon. Thus Experience ſhews, that the legal State, or State of Fear, is frequently mixt with the Natural. For few Men are ſo faſt aſleep in Sin, but they are ſometimes, more or leſs awakened. As the Spirit of GOD does not *wait for the Call of Man*, ſo at ſome times he *will* be heard. He puts them in Fear, ſo that for a Seaſon, at leaſt, the Heathen *know them-*

themſelves to be but Men. They feel the Burthen of Sin, and earneſtly deſire to flee from the Wrath to come. But not long. They ſeldom ſuffer the Arrows of Conviction to go deep into their Souls; but quickly ſtifle the Grace of GOD, and return to their Wallowing in the Mire.

In like manner, the Evangelical State, or State of Love, is frequently mixt with the Legal. For few of thoſe who have the Spirit of Bondage and Fear, remain always without Hope. The wiſe and gracious GOD rarely ſuffers this; for he remembreth that we are but Duſt. And he willeth not that *the Fleſh ſhould fail before him, or the Spirit which he hath made.* Therefore, at ſuch times as he ſeeth good, he gives a dawning of Light unto them that ſit in Darkneſs. He cauſes a Part of his Goodneſs to paſs before them, and ſhews he is a *GOD that heareth the Prayer.* They ſee the Promiſe which is by Faith in Chriſt Jeſus, tho' it be yet afar off: And hereby they are encouraged to *run with Patience the Race which is ſet before them.*

3. Another Reaſon why many deceive themſelves, is becauſe they do not conſider, how far a Man may go, and yet be in a Natural, or at beſt a Legal State. A Man may be of a compaſſionate and a benovelent Temper, he may be affable, courteous, generous, friendly; he may have ſome Degree of Meekneſs, Patience, Temperance, and of many other moral Virtues. He may feel many Deſires of ſhaking off all Vice, and attaining higher Degrees of Virtue. He may abſtain from much Evil; perhaps from all that is groſly contrary to Juſtice, Mercy or Truth. He may do much good, may feed the Hungry, cloath the Naked,

Naked, relieve the Widow and Fatherleſs. He may attend Publick Worſhip, uſe Prayer in private, read many Books of Devotion: And yet for all this, he may be a mere Natural Man, knowing neither himſelf nor GOD; equally a Stranger to the Spirit of Fear and to that of Love; having neither repented nor believed the Goſpel.

But ſuppoſe there were added to all this, a deep Conviction of Sin, with much Fear of the Wrath of GOD; vehement Deſires to caſt off every Sin, and to fulfil all Righteouſneſs; frequent Rejoicing in Hope, and Touches of Love often glancing upon the Soul: Yet neither do theſe prove a Man to be *under Grace*, to have True, Living, Chriſtian Faith, unleſs the Spirit of Adoption abide in his Heart, unleſs he can continually cry, Abba, Father!

4. Beware then, thou who art called by the Name of Chriſt, that thou come not ſhort of the Mark of thy high Calling. Beware thou reſt not, either in a Natural State, with too many that are accounted *good Chriſtians:* Or in a Legal State, wherein thoſe who are *highly eſteemed of Men*, are generally content to live and die. Nay, but GOD hath prepared better Things for thee, if thou follow on till thou attain. Thou art not called to fear and tremble, like Devils, but to rejoice and love, like the Angels of GOD. *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy GOD, with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind, and with all thy Strength.* Thou ſhalt *rejoice evermore.* Thou ſhalt *pray without ceaſing.* Thou ſhalt *in every Thing give Thanks.* Thou ſhalt do the Will of GOD *on Earth, as it is done in Heaven.* O *prove* thou *what is that good and acceptable*

and perfect Will of GOD. Now *present* thyſelf *a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable to* GOD. *Whereunto thou haſt already attained, hold faſt,* by *reaching forth unto thoſe Things which are before*; until *the* GOD *of Peace make thee perfect in every good Work, working in thee that which is well-pleaſing in his Sight, through Jeſus Chriſt, to whom be Glory for ever and ever! Amen!*

The

The Witneſs of the Spirit.

A

SERMON

On ROMANS viii. 16.

ROM. i. 16.

The Spirit itſelf beareth Witneſs with our Spirit, that we are the Children of GOD.

1. HOW many vain Men, not underſtanding what they ſpake, neither whereof they affirmed, have wreſted this Scripture, to the great Loſs, if not the Deſtruction, of their Souls? How many have miſtaken the Voice of their own Imagination, for this *Witneſs of the Spirit* of GOD? And thence idly preſumed, they were the Children of GOD, while they were doing the Works of the Devil? Theſe are truly and properly *Enthuſiaſts*; and indeed in the worſt Senſe of the Word. But with what Difficulty are they convinced thereof? Eſpecially, if they have drank deep into that Spirit of Error. All Endeavours to bring them to the Knowledge of themſelves, they will then account *fighting againſt GOD.* And that Vehemence and Impetuoſity of Spirit, which they call *contending earneſtly for the Faith*, ſets them ſo far above all the uſual Methods of Conviction, that we may well ſay, *With Men it is impoſſible.*

2. Who can then be ſurprized, if many reaſonable Men, ſeeing the dreadful Effects of this Deluſion, and labouring to keep at the utmoſt Diſtance from it, ſhould ſometimes lean toward another Extreme? If they are not forward to believe

lieve any who ſpeak of having this Witneſs, concerning which others have ſo grievouſly erred? If they are almoſt ready, to ſet all down for *Enthuſiaſts*, who uſe the Expreſſions which have been ſo terribly abuſed. Yea, if they ſhould queſtion, whether the Witneſs or Teſtimony here ſpoken of, be the Privilege of *ordinary* Chriſtians, and not rather, one of thoſe *extraordinary* Gifts, which they ſuppoſe belonged only to the Apoſtolick Age.

3. But is there any Neceſſity laid upon us, of running either into one Extreme or the other? May we not ſteer a middle Courſe? Keep a ſufficient Diſtance from that Spirit of Error and Enthuſiaſm, without denying the Gift of GOD, and giving up the great Privilege of his Children? Surely we may. In order thereto, let us conſider, in the Preſence and Fear of GOD,

Firſt, What is this *Witneſs* or *Teſtimony of our Spirit!* What is the *Teſtimony of GOD's Spirit?* And how does he *bear Witneſs with our Spirit, that we are the Children of GOD?*

Secondly, How is this joint Teſtimony of GOD's Spirit and our own, clearly and ſolidly diſtinguiſhed, from the Preſumption of a Natural Mind; and from the Deluſion of the Devil?

I. 1. Let us firſt conſider, What is the *Witneſs* or *Teſtimony of our Spirit*. But here I cannot but deſire all thoſe who are for ſwallowing up the *Teſtimony of the Spirit of GOD*, in the *rational Teſtimony* of our own Spirit, to obſerve, That in this Text the Apoſtle is ſo far from ſpeaking

ing of the Teſtimony of our own Spirit *only*, that it may be queſtioned, whether he ſpeaks of it *at all?* Whether he does not ſpeak, *only* of the Teſtimony of GOD's Spirit? It does not appear, but the original Text may be fairly underſtood thus. The Apoſtle had juſt ſaid, in the preceding Verſe, *Ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father*, and immediately ſubjoins, Αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα· (ſome Copies read τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα) συμμαρτυρεῖ τῷ πνεύματι ἡμῶν, ὅτι ἐσμεν τέκνα Θεῦ. Which may be tranſlated, *The ſame Spirit beareth Witneſs to our Spirit, that we are the Children of GOD* (the Propoſition σὺν only denoting, that he witneſſes this *at the ſame time* that he enables us to cry Abba, Father!) But I contend not; ſeeing ſo many other Texts, with the Experience of all real Chriſtians, ſufficiently evince, that there is, in every Believer, both the Teſtimony of GOD's Spirit, and the Teſtimony of his own, that he is a Child of GOD.

2. With regard to the latter, the Foundation thereof is laid in thoſe numerous Texts of Scripture, which deſcribe the Marks of the Children, of GOD, and that ſo plain, that he which runneth may read them. Theſe are alſo collected together, and placed in the ſtrongeſt Light, by many both antient and modern Writers. If any need farther Light, he may receive it by attending on the Miniſtry of GOD's Word; by meditating thereon before GOD in ſecret, and by converſing with thoſe who have the Knowledge of his Ways. And by the Reaſon or Underſtanding that GOD has given him (which Religion was deſigned not to extinguiſh, but to perfect: According to that of the Apoſtle, *Brethren, be not Children*

dren in Underſtanding; *in Malice* (or Wickedneſs) *be ye Children*; *but in Underſtanding be ye Men*, 1 Cor. xiv. 20.) Every Man applying thoſe ſcriptural Marks to himſelf, may know, whether he is a Child of God. Thus if he know, Firſt, *as many as are led by the Spirit of GOD*, into all holy Tempers and Actions, *they are the Sons of GOD*, (for which he has the infallible Aſſurance of holy Writ;) Secondly, I am thus *led by the Spirit of GOD*; he will eaſily conclude, Therefore I am a *Son of GOD*.

3. Agreeably to this are all thoſe plain Declarations of St. *John* in his firſt Epiſtle, *Hereby we know, that we do know him, if we keep his Commandments*, Chap. ii. ver. 3. *Whoſo keepeth his Word, in him verily is the Love of GOD perfected*; *hereby know we, that we are in him*, that we are indeed the Children of God, ver. 5. *If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth Righteouſneſs is born of him*, ver. 29. *We know, that we have paſſed from Death unto Life, becauſe we love the Brethren*, Chap. iii. ver. 4. *Hereby we know, that we are of the Truth, and ſhall aſſure our Hearts before him*, ver. 18. Namely becauſe we *love* one another, *not in Word, neither in Tongue*; *but in Deed and in Truth. Hereby know we, that we dwell in him, becauſe he hath given us of his* (loving) *Spirit*, Chap. iv. 13. And, *Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the* (obedient) *Spirit which he hath given us*, Chap. iii. 24.

4. It is highly probable, there never were any Children of God, from the Beginning of the World unto this Day, who were farther advanced in the Grace of God, and the Knowledge of our

our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, than the Apoſtle *John* at the Time when he wrote theſe Words, and the *Fathers in Chriſt* to whom he wrote. Notwithſtanding which, it is evident, both the Apoſtle himſelf, and all thoſe Pillars in GOD's Temple, were very far from deſpiſing theſe Marks, of their being the Children of GOD; and that they applied them to their own Souls, for the Confirmation of their Faith. Yet all this is no other than rational Evidence; the *Witneſs of our Spirit*, our Reaſon or Underſtanding. It all reſolves into this: Thoſe who have theſe Marks, they are the Children of GOD. But we have theſe Marks: Therefore we are Children of GOD.

5. But how does it appear, that we have theſe Marks? This is a Queſtion which ſtill remains. How does it appear, that we do love GOD and our Neighbour? And that we keep his Commandments? Obſerve, that the Meaning of the Queſtion is, How does it appear to *ourſelves?* (not to *others.*) I would aſk him then that propoſes this Queſtion, How does it appear to you, That you are alive? And that you are now in Eaſe and not in Pain? Are you not immediately conſcious of it? By the ſame immediate Conſciouſneſs you will know, if your Soul is alive to GOD: If you are ſaved from the Pain of proud Wrath, and have the Eaſe of a meek and quiet Spirit. By the ſame Means you cannot but perceive, if you love, rejoice, and delight in GOD. By the ſame, you muſt be directly aſſured, if you love your Neighbour as your ſelf; if you are kindly affection'd to all Mankind, and full of Gentleneſs and Long-Suffering. And with regard to the Outward Mark of the Children of GOD, which

is

is (according to St. *John*) the keeping his Commandments, You undoubtedly know in your own Breaſt, if, by the Grace of God, it belongs to you. Your Conſcience informs you from day to day, if you do not take the Name of God within your Lips, unleſs with Serioufneſs and Devotion, with Reverence and godly Fear: If you remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy: if you honour your Father and Mother; if you do to all as you would they ſhould do unto you: if you poſſeſs your Body in Sanctification and Honour; and if whether you eat or drink, you are temperate therein, and do all to the Glory of God.

6. Now this is properly the *Teſtimony of our own Spirit*; even the Teſtimony of our Conſcience, that God hath given us to be holy of Heart, and holy in outward Converſation. It is a Conſciouſneſs of our having received, in and by the Spirit of Adoption, the Tempers mention'd in the Word of God, as belonging to his adopted Children: Even, a loving Heart toward God and toward all Mankind, hanging with childlike Confidence on God our Father, deſiring nothing but him, caſting all our Care upon him, and embracing every Child of Man, with earneſt tender Affection; ſo as to be ready to lay down our Life for our Brother, as Chriſt laid down his Life for us: A Conſciouſneſs, that we are inwardly conform'd, by the Spirit of God to the Image of his Son, and that we walk before him in Juſtice, Mercy and Truth, doing the things which are pleaſing in his Sight.

7. But what is that Teſtimony of God's Spirit, which is ſuper-added to and conjoin'd with this?

this? How does he *bear witneſs with our Spirit, that we are the Children of GOD.* It is hard to find Words in the Language of Men, to explain *the deep Things of GOD.* Indeed there are none that will adequately expreſs, what the Children of God experience. But perhaps one might ſay (deſiring any who are taught of God, to correct, to ſoften or ſtrengthen the Expreſſion) The Teſtimony of the Spirit, is an inward Impreſſion on the Soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly *witneſſes to my Spirit, That I am a Child of GOD*; that Jeſus Chriſt hath loved me, and given himſelf for me: That all my Sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God.

8. That this *Teſtimony of the Spirit of GOD* muſt needs, in the very Nature of Things, be antecedent to the *Teſtimony of our own Spirit*, may appear from this ſingle Conſideration. We muſt be holy of Heart and holy in Life, before we can be conſcious that we are ſo; before we can have *the Teſtimony of our Spirit*, that we are inwardly and outwardly Holy. But we muſt love God, before we can be holy at all; this being the Root of all Holineſs. Now we cannot love God, till we know he loves us. *We love Him, becauſe he firſt loved us.* And we cannot know his Pardoning Love to us, till his Spirit witneſſes it to our Spirit. Since therefore this *Teſtimony of his Spirit* muſt precede the Love of God and all Holineſs, of conſequence it muſt precede our inward Conſciouſneſs thereof, or, The *Teſtimony of our Spirit* concerning them.

9. Then, and not till then, when the Spirit of GOD beareth that Witneſs to our Spirit, "GOD hath loved thee, and given his own Son to be the Propitiation for thy Sins; the Son of GOD hath loved thee, and hath waſhed thee from thy Sins in his Blood:" *We love* GOD, *becauſe he firſt loved us*, and for his Sake we *love our Brother alſo*. And of this we cannot but be conſcious to ourſelves: We *know the Things that are freely given to us of GOD*. We know that we love GOD and keep his Commandments. And *hereby alſo we know that we are of GOD*. This is that Teſtimony of our own Spirit; which, ſo long as we continue to love GOD and keep his Commandments, continues joined with the Teſtimony of GOD's Spirit, *that we are the Children of GOD*.

10. Not that I would, by any means, be underſtood, by any Thing which has been ſpoken concerning it, to exclude the Operation of the Spirit of GOD, even from the *Teſtimony of our own Spirit*. In no wiſe. It is he that not only worketh in us every manner of Thing that is good, but alſo ſhines upon his own Work, and clearly ſhews what he has wrought. Accordingly this is ſpoken of by St. *Paul*, as one great End of our receiving the Spirit, *That we may know the Things which are freely given to us of GOD:* that he may ſtrengthen the Teſtimony of our Conſcience, touching our *Simplicity and godly Sincerity*, and give us to diſcern in a fuller and ſtronger Light, that we now do the Things which pleaſe him.

11. Should it ſtill be enquired, How does the Spirit of GOD, *bear Witneſs with our Spirit, that we are the Children of GOD*, ſo as to exclude all Doubt,

Doubt, and evince the Reality of our Sonſhip? The Anſwer is clear, from what has been obſerved above. And firſt, as to the Witneſs of our Spirit. The Soul as intimately and evidently perceives, when it loves, delights, and rejoices in GOD, as when it loves and delights in any Thing on Earth. And it can no more doubt, whether it loves, delights and rejoices, or no, than whether it exiſts, or no. If therefore this be juſt Reaſoning,

He that now loves GOD, that delights and rejoices in him, with an humble Joy, an holy Delight, and an obedient Love, is a Child of GOD:

But I thus love, delight, and rejoice in GOD;

Therefore I am a Child of GOD:

Then a Chriſtian can in no wiſe doubt, of his being a Child of GOD. Of the Former Propoſition, he has as full an Aſſurance, as he has that the Scriptures are of GOD. And of his thus loving GOD, he has an Inward Proof, which is nothing ſhort of Self-evidence. Thus the *Teſtimony of our own Spirit* is with the moſt intimate Conviction manifeſted to our Hearts; in ſuch a Manner, as beyond all reaſonable Doubt, to evince the Reality of our Sonſhip.

12. The *Manner* how the Divine Teſtimony is manifeſted to the Heart, I do not take upon me to explain. *Such Knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me; I cannot attain unto it. The Wind bloweth:* And *I hear the Sound thereof.* But I cannot *tell how it cometh, or whither it goeth.* As no one knoweth the Things of a Man, ſave the Spirit of a Man that is in him; ſo the *Manner* of the Things of GOD knoweth no one,

ſave the Spirit of GOD. But the Fact we know: namely, that the Spirit of GOD does give a Believer ſuch a Teſtimony of his Adoption, that while it is preſent to the Soul, he can no more doubt the Reality of his Sonſhip, than he can doubt of the Shining of the Sun, while he ſtands in the full Blaze of his Beams.

II. 1. How this joint Teſtimony of GOD's Spirit and our Spirit, may be clearly and ſolidly diſtinguiſhed, from the Preſumption of a natural Mind, and from the Deluſion of the Devil, is the next Thing to be conſidered. And it highly imports all who deſire the Salvation of GOD, to conſider it with the deepeſt Attention, as they would not deceive their own Souls. An Error in this is generally obſerved to have the moſt fatal Conſequences: the rather, becauſe he that errs ſeldom diſcovers his Miſtake, till it is too late to remedy it.

2. And firſt, how is this Teſtimony to be diſtinguiſhed from the Preſumption of a natural Mind? It is certain, one who was never convinced of Sin, is always ready to flatter himſelf and to think of himſelf, eſpecially in ſpiritual Things, more highly than he ought to think. And hence, it is in no wiſe ſtrange if one who is vainly puffed up by his fleſhly Mind, when he hears of this Privilege of true Chriſtians, among whom he undoubtedly ranks himſelf, ſhould ſoon work himſelf up into a Perſuaſion, that he is already poſſeſt thereof. Such Inſtances now abound in the World, and have abounded in all Ages. How then may the real Teſtimony of the Spirit with our Spirit, be diſtinguiſhed from this damning Preſumption?

3. I

3. I anſwer, the Holy Scriptures abound with Marks, whereby the one may be diſtinguiſhed from the other. They deſcribe in the plaineſt Manner the Circumſtances which go before, which accompany, and which follow, the true, genuine Teſtimony of the Spirit of GOD with the Spirit of a Believer. Whoever carefully weighs and attends to theſe, will not need to put Darkneſs for Light. He will perceive ſo wide a Difference with reſpect to all theſe, between the Real and the Pretended Witneſs of the Spirit, that there will be no danger, I might ſay, no Poſſibility, of confounding the one with the other.

4. By theſe, one who vainly preſumes on the Gift of GOD, might ſurely know, if he really deſired it, that he hath been hitherto *given up to a ſtrong Deluſion*, and ſuffered to *believe a Lie*. For the Scriptures lay down thoſe clear, obvious Marks as preceding, accompanying and following that Gift, which a little Reflection would convince him, beyond all Doubt, were never found in his Soul. For Inſtance, the Scripture deſcribes Repentance, or Conviction of Sin, as conſtantly going before this Witneſs of Pardon. So, *Repent; for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*, Matt. iii. 2. *Repent ye, and believe the Goſpel*, Mark i. 15. *Repent, and be baptized every one of you, for the Remiſſion of Sins*, Acts ii. 38. *Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out*, Chap. iii. 19. In Conformity whereto our Church alſo continually places Repentance, before Pardon or the Witneſs of it. "He pardoneth and abſolveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his Holy Goſpel." "Almighty GOD — hath promiſed Forgiveneſs

of Sins to all them, who with hearty Repentance and true Faith turn unto him." But he is a Stranger even to this Repentance. He hath never known *a broken and a contrite Heart. The Remembrance of* his *Sins* was never *grievous unto* him, nor *the Burthen of them intolerable.* In repeating thoſe Words, he never meant what he ſaid; he merely paid a Compliment to GOD. And were it only from the Want of this previous Work of GOD, he hath too great Reaſon to believe, that he hath graſped a mere Shadow, and never yet known the real Privilege of the Sons of GOD.

5. Again, the Scriptures deſcribe the being born of GOD, which muſt precede the Witneſs that we are his Children, as a vaſt and mighty Change, a Change *from Darkneſs to Light*, as well as *from the Power of Satan unto GOD:* As a *paſſing from Death unto Life*, a Reſurrection from the Dead. Thus the Apoſtle to the *Epheſians*; *You hath he quickened who were dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins*, Chap. ii. ver. 1. And again, *When we were dead in Sins, he hath quickened us together with Chriſt*; *and hath raiſed us up together, and made us ſit together, in heavenly Places, in Chriſt Jeſus*, ver. 5, 6. But what knoweth he concerning whom we now ſpeak, of any ſuch Change as this? He is altogether unacquainted with this whole Matter. This is a Language which he does not underſtand. He tells you, "He always was a Chriſtian. He knows no Time when he had need of ſuch a Change." By this alſo, if he give himſelf leave to think, may he know, that he is not born of the Spirit: That he has never yet known GOD; but has miſtaken the Voice of Nature for the Voice of GOD.

6. But

6. But waving the Conſideration of whatever he has or has not experienced in time paſt; by the preſent Marks may we eaſily diſtinguiſh a Child of GOD, from a preſumptuous Self-deceiver. The Scriptures deſcribe that Joy in the Lord which accompanies the Witneſs of his Spirit, as an humble Joy, a Joy that abaſes to the Duſt; that makes a pardon'd Sinner cry out, "I am vile! What am I or my Father's Houſe? —Now mine Eye ſeeth thee, I abhor myſelf in Duſt and Aſhes!" And wherever Lowlineſs is, there is Meekneſs, Patience, Gentleneſs, Long-ſuffering. There is a ſoft, yielding Spirit; a Mildneſs and Sweetneſs; a Tenderneſs of Soul which Words cannot expreſs. But do theſe Fruits attend that *ſuppoſed* Teſtimony of the Spirit, in a Preſumtuous Man? Juſt the Reverſe. The more confident he is of the Favour of GOD, the more is he lifted up. The more does he exalt himſelf; the more haughty and aſſuming is his whole Behaviour. The ſtronger Witneſs he imagines himſelf to have, the more overbearing is he to all around him; the more incapable of receiving any Reproof, the more impatient of Contradiction. Inſtead of being more meek, and gentle, and teachable, more *ſwift to hear, and ſlow to ſpeak*, he is more ſlow to hear and ſwift to ſpeak, more unready to learn of any one; more fiery and vehement in his Temper, and eager in his Converſation. Yea, perhaps, there will ſometimes appear a kind of Fierceneſs, in his Air, his manner of Speaking, his whole Deportment, as if he were juſt going to take the Matter out of GOD's Hands, and himſelf to *devour the Adverſaries*.

7. Once more. The Scriptures teach, *this is the Love of GOD* (the ſure Mark thereof) *that we keep his Commandments*, 1 *John* v. 3. And our Lord himſelf ſaith, *he that keepeth my Commandments, he it is that loveth me*, *John* xiv. 21. Love rejoices to obey; to do in every Point, whatever is acceptable to the Beloved. A true Lover of GOD haſtens to do his Will on Earth as it is done in Heaven. But is this the Character of the preſumptuous Pretender to the Love of GOD? Nay, but his Love gives him a Liberty to diſobey, to break, not keep, the Commandments of GOD. Perhaps when he was in Fear of the Wrath of GOD, he did labour to do his Will. But now looking on himſelf as *not under the Law*, he thinks he is no longer obliged to obſerve it. He is therefore leſs zealous of good Works, leſs careful to abſtain from Evil; leſs watchful over his own Heart, leſs jealous over his Tongue. He is leſs earneſt to deny himſelf, and to take up his Croſs daily. In a word, the whole Form of his Life is changed, ſince he has fancied himſelf to be at *Liberty*. He is no longer *exerciſing himſelf unto Godlineſs*; *wreſtling not* only *with Fleſh and Blood, but with Principalities and Powers, enduring Hardſhips, agonizing to enter in at the ſtrait Gate*. No; he has found an eaſier Way to Heaven; a broad, ſmooth, flowry Path; in which he can ſay to his Soul, "Soul, take thy Eaſe; eat, drink, and be merry." It follows with undeniable Evidence, that he has not the true Teſtimony of his own Spirit. He cannot be conſcious of having thoſe Marks which he hath not; that Lowlineſs, Meekneſs, and Obedience. Nor yet can the Spirit of the GOD of Truth bear Wit-

Witneſs to a Lie; or teſtify that he is a Child of GOD, when he is manifeſtly a Child of the Devil.

8. Diſcover thyſelf, thou poor Self-deceiver! Thou who art confident of being a Child of GOD, thou who ſayeſt, "I have the Witneſs in myſelf," and therefore defieſt all thy Enemies. Thou art weighed in the Balance and found wanting; even in the Balance of the Sanctuary. The Word of the Lord hath tried thy Soul, and proved thee to be reprobate Silver. Thou art not lowly of Heart. Therefore thou haſt not received the Spirit of Jeſus unto this Day. Thou art not gentle and meek; therefore thy Joy is nothing worth: It is not Joy in the Lord. Thou doſt not keep his Commandments; therefore thou loveſt him not, neither art thou Partaker of the Holy Ghoſt. It is conſequently, as certain and as evident, as the Oracles of GOD can make it, his Spirit doth not bear Witneſs with thy Spirit, that thou art a Child of GOD. O cry unto him that the Scales may fall off thine Eyes, that thou mayſt know thyſelf as thou art known; that thou mayſt receive the Sentence of Death in thyſelf, till thou hear the Voice that raiſes the Dead, ſaying, "be of good Cheer: Thy Sins are forgiven; thy Faith hath made thee whole."

9. "But how may one who has the real Witneſs in himſelf diſtinguiſh it from Preſumption?" How, I pray, do you diſtinguiſh Day from Night? How do you diſtinguiſh Light from Darkneſs? Or the Light of a Star, or glimmering Taper, from the Light of the Noon-day Sun? Is there not an inherent, obvious, eſſential Difference between the one and the other? And do you not

immediately and directly perceive that Difference, provided your Senſes are rightly diſpoſed? In like manner, there is an inherent, eſſential Difference between Spiritual Light and Spiritual Darkneſs: And between the Light wherewith the Sun of Righteouſneſs ſhines upon our Heart, and that glimmering Light, which ariſes only from *Sparks of* our *own Kindling*. And this Difference alſo is immediately and directly perceived, if our Spiritual Senſes are rightly diſpoſed.

10. To require a more minute and philoſophical Account of the *Manner* whereby we diſtinguiſh theſe, and of the *Criteria*, or intrinſick Marks, whereby we know the Voice of God, is to make a Demand which can never be anſwer'd; no, not by one who has the deepeſt Knowledge of God. Suppoſe, when *Paul* anſwer'd before *Agrippa*, the wiſe *Roman* had ſaid, "Thou talkeſt of hearing the Voice of the Son of God. How doſt thou know, it was his Voice? By what *Criteria*, what intrinſick Marks, doſt thou know the Voice of God? Explain to me, the *Manner* of diſtinguiſhing this, from a Human or Angelick Voice." Can you believe, the Apoſtle himſelf would have once attempted to anſwer ſo Idle a Demand? And yet doubtleſs the Moment he heard that Voice, he knew it was the Voice of God. But *how* he knew this, who is able to explain? Perhaps neither Man nor Angel.

11. To come yet cloſer. Suppoſe God were now to ſpeak to any Soul, "Thy Sins are forgiven thee." He muſt be willing, that Soul ſhould know his Voice; otherwiſe he would ſpeak in vain. And he is able to effect this; for whenever

ever he wills, to do is preſent with him. And he does effect it. That Soul is abſolutely aſſur'd, "This Voice is the Voice of GOD." But yet he who hath that Witneſs in himſelf, cannot explain it to one who hath not. Nor indeed is it to be expected that he ſhould. Were there any natural Medium to prove, or natural Method to explain the Things of GOD, to unexperienced Men; then the natural Man might diſcern and know the Things of the Spirit of GOD. But this is utterly contrary to the Aſſertion of the Apoſtle, that *he cannot know them; becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcern'd*; even by ſpiritual Senſes, which the natural Man hath not.

12. "But how ſhall I know, that my ſpiritual Senſes are rightly diſpoſed?" This alſo is a Queſtion of vaſt Importance. For if a Man miſtake in this, he may run on in endleſs Error and Deluſion. And how am I aſſured, that this is not my Caſe; and that I do not miſtake the Voice of the Spirit?" Even by the *Teſtimony of your own Spirit*; by *the Anſwer of a good Conſcience toward GOD*. By the Fruits which he hath wrought in your Spirit you ſhall know the *Teſtimony of the Spirit of GOD*. Hereby you ſhall know, that you are in no Deluſion, that you have not deceived your own Soul. The immediate Fruits of the Spirit, ruling in the Heart, are *Love, Joy, Peace; Bowels of Mercies, Humbleneſs of Mind, Meekneſs, Gentleneſs, Long-ſuffering*. And the outward Fruits are, The doing Good to all Men; the doing no Evil to any; and the walking in the Light; a zealous, uniform Obedience to all the Commandments of GOD.

13. By the ſame Fruits ſhall you diſtinguiſh

this Voice of GOD, from any Deluſion of the Devil. That proud Spirit cannot humble thee before GOD. He neither can nor would ſoften thy Heart, and melt it firſt into earneſt Mourning after GOD, and then into filial Love. It is not the Adverſary of GOD and Man, that enables thee to love thy Neighbour; or to put on Meekneſs, Gentleneſs, Patience, Temperance, and the whole Armour of GOD. He is not divided againſt himſelf, or a Deſtroyer of Sin, his own Work. No; it is none but the Son of GOD who cometh *to deſtroy the Works of the Devil.* As ſurely therefore as Holineſs is of GOD, and as Sin is the Work of the Devil, ſo ſurely the Witneſs thou haſt in thyſelf is not of Satan, but of GOD.

14. Well then mayſt thou ſay, *Thanks be unto GOD for his unſpeakable Gift!* Thanks be unto GOD, who giveth me to *know in whom I have believed:* Who *hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into my Heart, crying, Abba, Father,* and even now *bearing witneſs with my Spirit, that I am a Child of GOD!* And ſee, that not only thy Lips, but thy Life ſhew forth his Praiſe. He hath ſealed thee for his own; *glorify him* then *in thy Body and thy Spirit which are* his. Beloved, if thou *haſt this Hope in* thyſelf, *purify* thyſelf *as he is pure.* While thou beholdeſt *what manner of Love the Father hath given* thee, that thou ſhouldſt *be called a Child of GOD; cleanſe* thyſelf *from all Filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit, perfecting Holineſs in the Fear of GOD:* And let all thy Thoughts, Words, and Works be a ſpiritual Sacrifice, holy, acceptable to GOD through Chriſt Jeſus!

The

The Witneſs of our own Spirit.

A

SERMON

On 2 Cor. i. 12.

2 Cor. i. 12.

This is our Rejoicing, the Teſtimony of our Conſcience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not with fleſhly Wiſdom, but by the Grace of GOD, we have had our Converſation in the World.

1. SUCH is the Voice of every true Believer in Chriſt, ſo long as he abides in Faith and Love. *He that followeth me* ſaith our Lord, *walketh not in Darkneſs:* And while he hath the Light, he rejoiceth therein. *As* he *hath received the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſo* he *walketh in him.* And while he walketh in him, the Exhortation of the Apoſtle takes place in his Soul day by day, *Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I ſay, rejoice.*

2. But that we may not build our Houſe upon the Sand, (leſt, when the Rains deſcend, and the Winds blow, and the Floods ariſe and beat upon it, it fall, and great be the Fall thereof) I intend, in the following Diſcourſe, to ſhew, what is the Nature and Ground of a Chriſtian's Joy. We know, in general, It is that happy Peace, that calm Satisfaction of Spirit, which ariſes from ſuch a Teſtimony of his Conſcience, as is here deſcribed by the Apoſtle. But in order to underſtand this the more throughly, it will be requiſite to weigh all his Words: Whence will eaſily

appear, both what we are to underſtand by *Conſcience*, and what, by the *Teſtimony* thereof; and alſo, How he that hath this Teſtimony rejoiceth evermore.

3. And, firſt, What are we to underſtand by *Conſcience?* What is the Meaning of this Word that is in every one's Mouth? One would imagine, it was an exceeding difficult Thing, to diſcover this, when we conſider, how large and numerous Volumes have been from time to time wrote on this Subject: And how all the Treaſures of ancient and modern Learning have been ranſack'd, in order to explain it. And yet it is to be fear'd, it has not received much Light from all thoſe elaborate Enquiries. Rather, have not moſt of thoſe Writers puzzled the Cauſe; *darkening Counſel by Words without Knowledge*; perplexing a Subject, plain in itſelf, and eaſy to be underſtood? For ſet aſide but hard Words, and every Man of an honeſt Heart will ſoon underſtand the Thing.

4. GOD has made us Thinking Beings, capable of perceiving what is preſent, and of reflecting or looking back on what is paſt. In particular, we are capable of perceiving, whatſoever paſſes in our own Hearts or Lives; of knowing whatſoever we feel or do; and that either while it paſſes, or when it is paſt. This we mean when we ſay, Man is a *conſcious* Being: He hath a *Conſciouſneſs* or inward Perception, both of Things preſent and paſt relating to himſelf, of his own Tempers and outward Behaviour. But what we uſually term *Conſcience*, implies ſomewhat more than this. It is not barely, The Knowledge of our preſent, or the Remembrance of

of our preceding Life. To remember, to bear witneſs either of paſt or preſent Things, is only one, and the leaſt Office of Conſcience. Its main Buſineſs is to excuſe or accuſe, to approve or diſapprove, to acquit or condemn.

5. Some late Writers indeed have given a new Name to this, and have choſe to ſtile it, a *moral Senſe*. But the old Word ſeems preferable to the new, were it only on this Account, That it is more common and familiar among Men, and therefore eaſier to be underſtood. And to Chriſtians it is undeniably preferable, on another Account alſo; namely, becauſe it is Scriptural; becauſe it is the Word which the Wiſdom of GOD hath choſe to uſe in the Inſpir'd Writings.

And according to the Meaning wherein it is generally uſed there, particularly in the Epiſtles of St. *Paul*, we may underſtand by Conſcience, A Faculty or Power, implanted by GOD in every Soul that comes into the World, of perceiving what is Right or Wrong in his own Heart or Life, in his Tempers, Thoughts, Words and Actions.

6. But what is the *Rule* whereby Men are to judge of Right and Wrong? Whereby their Conſcience is to be directed? The Rule of Heathens, (as the Apoſtle teaches elſewhere) is *the Law written in their Hearts. Theſe*, ſaith he, *not having the* (outward) *Law, are a Law unto themſelves: Who ſhew the Work of the Law* (that which the outward Law preſcribes) *written in their Heart*, by the Finger of GOD; *their Conſcience alſo bearing witneſs*, whether they walk by this Rule, or not; *and their Thoughts the mean while accuſing, or even excuſing*, acquitting, defending

ſending them, (ἢ καὶ ἀπολογουμένων) *Rom.* ii. 14, 15. But the Chriſtian Rule of Right and Wrong is the Word of God, the Writings of the Old and New Teſtament: All which the Prophets and *Holy Men of Old* wrote, *as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt: All* that *Scripture* which was *given by Inſpiration of GOD, and* which *is* indeed *profitable for Doctrine*, or teaching the whole Will of GOD; *for Reproof* of what is contrary thereto; *for Correction* of Error, *and for Inſtruction* (or training us up) *in Righteouſneſs.* 2 Tim. iii. 16.

This is *a Lanthorn unto* a Chriſtian's *Feet, and a Light in all* his *Paths.* This alone he receives as his Rule of Right or Wrong, of whatever is really Good or Evil. He eſteems nothing Good, but what is here enjoin'd, either directly or by plain Conſequence. He accounts nothing Evil but what is here forbidden, either in Terms, or by undeniable Inference. Whatever the Scripture neither forbids nor enjoins, (either directly, or by plain Conſequence) he believes to be of an indifferent Nature, to be in itſelf neither Good nor Evil: This being the whole and ſole outward Rule, whereby his Conſcience is to be directed in all Things.

7. And if it be directed thereby in fact, then hath he *the Anſwer of a good Conſcience toward GOD.* A *good Conſcience* is what is elſewhere termed by the Apoſtle, a *Conſcience void of Offence.* So, what he at one time expreſſes thus, *I have lived in all good Conſcience before GOD until this Day,* Acts xxiii. 1. he denotes at another, by that Expreſſion, *Herein do I exerciſe myſelf, to have always a Conſcience void of Offence toward GOD and toward Man,* ch. xxiv. 16.

Now

Now in order to this, there is abſolutely requir'd, Firſt, A Right Underſtanding of the Word of GOD, of his *holy and acceptable and perfect Will* concerning us, as it is revealed therein. For it is impoſſible we ſhould walk by a Rule, if we do not know what it means. There is, Secondly, required (which how few have attain'd?) a true Knowledge of ourſelves? a Knowledge both of our Hearts and Lives, of our inward Tempers and outward Converſation: ſeeing, if we know them not, it is not poſſible that we ſhould compare them with our Rule. There is requir'd, Thirdly, an Agreement of our Hearts and Lives, of our Tempers and Converſation, of our Thoughts and Words and Works with that Rule, with the written Word of GOD. For without this, if we have any Conſcience at all, it can be only an evil Conſcience. There is, Fourthly, requir'd, an inward Perception, of this Agreement with our Rule. And this habitual Perception, this inward Conſciouſneſs itſelf, is properly a *Good Conſcience*; or (in the other Phraſe of the Apoſtle) *A Conſcience void of Offence, toward GOD and toward Man.*

8. But whoever deſires to have a Conſcience thus void of Offence, let him ſee that he lay the right Foundation. Let him remember, *Other Foundation* of this *can no Man lay, than that which is laid, even Jeſus Chriſt.* And let him alſo be mindful, that no Man buildeth on him but by a Living Faith; that no Man is a Partaker of Chriſt, until he can clearly teſtify, *The Life which I now live, I live by Faith in the Son of GOD*; in him who is now *revealed* in my Heart; who *loved me, and gave himſelf for me.* Faith alone

alone is that Evidence, that Conviction, that Demonſtration of Things inviſible, whereby the Eyes of our Underſtanding being open'd, and Divine Light poured in upon them, we *ſee the wondrous Things of* GOD's *Law*, the Excellency and Purity of it; the Heighth and Depth and Length and Breadth thereof, and of every Commandment contained therein. It is by Faith, that beholding *the Light of the Glory of GOD, in the Face of Jeſus Chriſt*, we perceive, as in a Glaſs, all that is in ourſelves, yea, the inmoſt Motions of our Souls. And by this alone can that bleſſed Love of GOD be *ſhed abroad in our Hearts*, which enables us ſo to love one another as Chriſt loved us. By this, is that gracious Promiſe fulfilled, unto all the *Iſrael* of GOD, *I will put my Laws into their Minds, and write* (or engrave) *them in their Hearts*, Heb. viii. 10. Hereby producing in their Souls, an entire Agreement with his holy and perfect Law, and *bringing into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Chriſt.*

And as an evil Tree cannot bring forth good Fruit, ſo a good Tree cannot bring forth evil Fruit. As the Heart therefore of a Believer, ſo likewiſe his Life is throughly conformed to the Rule of GOD's Commandments. In a Conſciouſneſs whereof, he can give Glory to GOD, and ſay, with the Apoſtle, *This is our Rejoicing, the Teſtimony of our Conſcience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not with fleſhly Wiſdom, but by the Grace of GOD, we have had our Converſation in the World.*

9. *We have had our Converſation.* The Apoſtle in the Original, expreſſes this by one ſingle Word (ἀνεστράφημεν.) But the Meaning thereof is ex-

exceeding broad, taking in our whole Deportment, yea, every inward as well as outward Circumſtance, whether relating to our Soul or Body. It includes every Motion of our Heart, of our Tongue, of our Hands and bodily Members. It extends to all our Actions and Words; to the Employment of all our Powers and Faculties; to the manner of uſing every Talent we have received, with reſpect either to GOD or Man.

10. *We have had our Converſation in the World*; even in the World of the Ungodly: Not only among the Children of GOD (that were, comparatively, a little Thing:) But among the Children of the Devil, among thoſe that *lie in Wickedneſs*, ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ, *in the Wicked one*. What a World is this! How throughly impregnated with the Spirit it continually breathes! as our GOD is good and doth good, ſo the God of this World, and all his Children, are evil, and do evil, (ſo far as they are ſuffered) to all the Children of GOD. Like their Father, they are always lying in wait, or *walking about, ſeeking whom they may devour:* Uſing Fraud or Force, ſecret Wiles or open Violence, to deſtroy thoſe who are not of the World: Continually warring againſt our Souls, and by old or new Weapons and Devices of every kind, labouring to bring them back into the Snare of the Devil, into the broad Road that leadeth to Deſtruction.

11. *We have had our* whole *Converſation in* ſuch *a World, in Simplicity and godly Sincerity*. Firſt, *in Simplicity*. This is what our Lord recommends, under the Name of a *Single Eye*. *The Light of the Body*, ſaith he, *is the Eye. If therefore thine Eye be ſingle, thy whole Body ſhall be full*

full of Light. The Meaning whereof is this. What the Eye is to the Body, that the Intention is, to all the Words and Actions. If therefore this Eye of thy Soul be ſingle, all thy Actions and Converſation, ſhall be *full of Light*, of the Light of Heaven; of Love and Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt.

We are then ſimple of Heart, when the Eye of our Mind is ſingly fixt on GOD: When in all Things we aim at GOD alone, as our GOD, our Portion, our Strength, our Happineſs, our exceeding great Reward, our All, in Time and Eternity. This is Simplicity; when a ſteddy View, a ſingle Intention of promoting his Glory, of doing and ſuffering his bleſſed Will, runs thro' our whole Soul, fills all our Heart, and is the conſtant Spring of all our Thoughts, Deſires and Purpoſes.

12. *We have had our Converſation in the World*, Secondly, *in godly Sincerity.* The Difference between Simplicity and Sincerity ſeems to be chiefly this: Simplicity regards the Intention itſelf, Sincerity, the Execution of it. And this Sincerity relates not barely to our Words, but to our whole Converſation, as deſcribed above. It is not here to be underſtood in that narrow Senſe, wherein St. *Paul* himſelf ſometimes uſes it. for ſpeaking the Truth, or abſtaining from Guile, from Craft and Diſſimulation. But in a more extenſive Meaning, as actually hitting the Mark which we aim at by Simplicity. Accordingly it implies in this Place, that we do in fact ſpeak and do all to the Glory of GOD; that all our Words are not only pointed at this, but actually conducive thereto; that all our Actions flow on in an even Stream,

Stream, uniformly ſubſervient to this great End: And that in our whole Lives, we are moving ſtrait toward GOD, and that continually; walking ſteddily on in the High-way of Holineſs, in the Paths of Juſtice, Mercy and Truth.

13. This Sincerity is term'd by the Apoſtle, Godly Sincerity, or the Sincerity of GOD, (εἰλικρινείᾳ Θεῦ,) to prevent our miſtaking or confounding it with the Sincerity of the Heathens: (For they had alſo a kind of Sincerity among them, for which they profeſſed no ſmall Veneration) likewiſe to denote the Object and End of this, as of every Chriſtian Virtue; ſeeing whatever does not ultimately tend to GOD, ſinks among *the beggarly Elements of the World.* By ſtyling it, the Sincerity of GOD, he alſo points out the Author of it, the *Father of Lights, from whom every good and perfect Gift deſcendeth:* Which is ſtill more clearly declared in the following Words, *Not with fleſhly Wiſdom, but by the Grace of GOD.*

14. *Not with fleſhly Wiſdom.* As if he had ſaid, We cannot thus converſe in the World, by any natural Strength or Underſtanding, neither by any naturally-acquired Knowledge or Wiſdom. We cannot gain this Simplicity, or practiſe this Sincerity, by the Force either of Good Senſe, Good Nature or Good Breeding. It overſhoots all our Native Courage and Reſolution, as well as all our Precepts of Philoſophy. The Power of Cuſtom is not able to train us up to this, nor the moſt exquiſite Rules of Human Education. Neither could I *Paul* ever attain hereto, notwithſtanding all the Advantages I enjoy'd, ſo long as

I was

I was *in the Fleſh*, in my natural State, and purſued it only by *fleſhly*, natural *Wiſdom*.

And yet ſurely, if any Man could, *Paul* himſelf might have attain'd thereto by that Wiſdom. For we can hardly conceive any, who was more highly favour'd with all the Gifts both of Nature and Education. Beſides his natural Abilities, probably not inferior to thoſe of any Perſon then upon the Earth, he had all the Benefits of Learning, ſtudying at the Univerſity of *Tarſus*, afterwards brought up at the Feet of *Gamaliel*, the Perſon of the greateſt Account both for Knowledge and Integrity, that was then in the whole *Jewiſh* Nation. And he had all the poſſible Advantages of Religious Education, being a Phariſee, the Son of a Phariſee, train'd up in the very ſtraiteſt Sect or Profeſſion, diſtinguiſh'd from all others by a more eminent Strictneſs. And herein he had *profited above many* others, *who were his Equals in Years, being more abundantly zealous* of whatever he Thought would pleaſe GOD, and *as touching the Righteouſneſs of the Law blameleſs.* But it could not be, that he ſhould hereby attain this Simplicity and godly Sincerity. It was all but loſt Labour; in a deep, piercing Senſe of which he was at length conſtrain'd to cry out, *The Things which were Gain to me, thoſe I counted Loſs for Chriſt. Yea doubtleſs, and I count all Things but Loſs, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord.* Phil. iii. 7, 8.

15. It could not be that ever he ſhould attain to this, but by the *excellent Knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt*, our Lord: Or *by the Grace of GOD*; another Expreſſion of nearly the ſame Import. By *the Grace of GOD* is ſometimes to be underſtood,

ſtood, that free Love, that unmerited Mercy, by which I a Sinner, thro' the Merits of Chriſt, am now reconciled to GOD. But in this Place it rather means, that Power of GOD the Holy Ghoſt, which *worketh in us both to will and to do, of his good Pleaſure.* As ſoon as ever the Grace of GOD, in the former Senſe, his pardoning Love is manifeſted to our Soul, the Grace of GOD, in the latter Senſe, the Power of his Spirit, takes Place therein. And now we can perform, thro' GOD, what to Man was impoſſible. Now we can order our Converſation aright. We can do all Things in the Light and Power of that Love, thro' Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth us. We now have *the Teſtimony of our Conſcience*, which we could never have by fleſhly Wiſdom, *that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity we have our Converſation in the World.*

16. This is properly the Ground of a Chriſtian's Joy. We may now therefore readily conceive, How he that hath this Teſtimony in himſelf, *rejoiceth evermore. My Soul*, may he ſay, *doth magnify the Lord, and my Spirit rejoiceth in GOD my Saviour.* I rejoice in him, who of his own unmerited Love, of his own free and tender Mercy, *hath called me into this State of Salvation*, wherein thro' his Power I now ſtand. I rejoice becauſe his Spirit beareth witneſs to my Spirit, that I am bought with the Blood of the Lamb, and that believing in him, "I am a Member of Chriſt, a Child of GOD, and an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven." I rejoice becauſe the Senſe of GOD's Love to me, hath by the ſame Spirit wrought in me to love him, and to love for his Sake every Child of Man, every Soul that

he hath made. I rejoice, becauſe he gives me to feel in myſelf *the Mind that was in Chriſt:* Simplicity, a ſingle Eye to him, in every Motion of my Heart; Power always to fix the loving Eye of my Soul on him who *loved me, and gave himſelf for me*, to aim at him alone, at his glorious Will, in all I think or ſpeak or do: Purity, deſiring nothing more but GOD, *crucifying the Fleſh with its Affections and Luſts, ſetting my Affections on Things above, not on Things of the Earth:* Holineſs, a Recovery of the Image of GOD, a Renewal of Soul after his Likeneſs: And godly Sincerity, directing all my Words and Works, ſo as to conduce to his Glory. In this I likewiſe rejoice, yea and will rejoice, becauſe my Conſcience beareth me witneſs in the Holy Ghoſt, by the Light he continually pours in upon it, that I *walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith* I am *called:* that I *abſtain from all Appearance of Evil, fleeing from Sin as from the Face of a Serpent*; that as I have Opportunity, I do all poſſible Good, in every kind, to all Men; that I follow my Lord in all my Steps, and do what is acceptable in his Sight. I rejoice becauſe I both ſee and feel, through the Inſpiration of GOD's Holy Spirit, that all my Works are wrought in him, yea and that it is he who worketh all my Works in me. I rejoice in ſeeing, thro' the Light of GOD which ſhines in my Heart, that I have Power to walk in his Ways, and that thro' his Grace, I turn not therefrom, to the Right Hand or to the Left.

17. Such is the Ground and the Nature of that Joy, whereby a Chriſtian rejoiceth evermore. And from all this we may eaſily infer, Firſt, That this is not a *natural* Joy. It does not

not ariſe from any natural Cauſe: Not from any ſudden Flow of Spirits. This may give a tranſient Start of Joy. But the Chriſtian *rejoiceth always.* It cannot be owing to bodily Health or Eaſe; to Strength and Soundneſs of Conſtitution. For it is equally ſtrong in Sickneſs and Pain; yea perhaps far ſtronger than before. Many Chriſtians have never experienced any Joy, to be compared with that which then filled their Soul, when the Body was well nigh worn out with Pain, or conſumed away with pining Sickneſs. Leaſt of all can it be aſcribed to outward Proſperity, to the Favour of Men, or Plenty of worldly Goods. For then chiefly, when their Faith has been tried as with Fire, by all manner of outward Afflictions, have the Children of GOD rejoiced in him, *whom unſeen they loved*, even *with Joy unſpeakable.* And never ſurely did Men rejoice like thoſe, who were uſed as *the Filth and Off-ſcouring of the World*; who wander'd to and fro, being in want of all Things; in Hunger, in Cold, in Nakedneſs: Who *had Trials*, not only *of cruel Mockings*, but *moreover of Bonds and Impriſonments:* Yea, who at laſt *counted not their Lives dear unto themſelves, ſo* they *might finiſh their Courſe with Joy.*

18. From the preceding Conſiderations, we may, Secondly, infer, That the Joy of a Chriſtian does not ariſe from any *Blindneſs of Conſcience*, from his not being able to diſcern Good from Evil. So far from it, that he was an utter Stranger to this Joy, till the Eyes of his Underſtanding were open'd! that he knew it not, until he had Spiritual Senſes, fitted to diſcern ſpiritual Good and Evil. And now the Eye of his

Soul waxeth not dim. He was never ſo ſharp-ſighted before. He has ſo quick a Perception of the ſmalleſt Things, as is quite amazing to the natural Man. As a Mote is viſible in the Sun-beam, ſo to him who is walking in the Light, in the Beams of the uncreated Sun, every Mote of Sin is viſible. Nor does he cloſe the Eyes of his Conſcience any more. That Sleep is departed from him. His Soul is always broad awake: No more Slumber or folding of the Hands to Reſt! He is always ſtanding on the Tower, and hearkning what his Lord will ſay concerning him: And always rejoicing in this very Thing, in *ſeeing him that is inviſible.*

19. Neither does the Joy of a Chriſtian ariſe, Thirdly, from any *Dulneſs* or *Callouſneſs of Conſcience.* A Kind of Joy, it is true, may ariſe from this, in thoſe whoſe *fooliſh Hearts are darkned*; whoſe Heart is callous, unfeeling, dull of Senſe; and conſequently, without ſpiritual Underſtanding. Becauſe of their ſenſeleſs, unfeeling Hearts, they may rejoice even in committing Sin: And this they may probably call *Liberty!* Which is indeed mere Drunkenneſs of Soul: A fatal Numbneſs of Spirit, the ſtupid Inſenſibility of a ſeared Conſcience. On the contrary, a Chriſtian has the moſt exquiſite Senſibility; ſuch as he could not have conceived before. He never had ſuch a Tenderneſs of Conſcience as he has had, ſince the Love of GOD has reigned in his Heart. And this alſo is his Glory and Joy; that GOD hath heard his daily Prayer.

"O that my tender Soul might fly
The firſt, abhorr'd Approach of Ill:
Quick, as the Apple of an Eye
The ſlighteſt Touch of Sin to feel."

20. To

20. To conclude. Chriſtian Joy, is Joy in Obedience: Joy in loving GOD and keeping his Commandments. And yet not in keeping them, as if we were thereby to fulfil the Terms of the *Covenant of Works*; as if by any Works or Righteouſneſs of ours, we were to *procure* Pardon and Acceptance with GOD. Not ſo: We are already pardoned and accepted, thro' the Mercy of GOD in Chriſt Jeſus—Not as if we were by our own Obedience to *procure* Life, Life from the Death of Sin. This alſo we have already thro' the Grace of GOD. *Us hath he quicken'd, who were dead in Sin.* And now we are *alive to GOD, thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* But we rejoice in walking, according to the *Covenant* of *Grace*, in holy Love and happy Obedience. We rejoice in knowing, That *being juſtified thro' his Grace*, we have *not received that Grace of GOD in vain*; That GOD having freely (not for the Sake of our willing or running, but thro' the Blood of the Lamb) reconciled us to himſelf, we run in the Strength which he hath given us, the Way of his Commandments. He hath *girded us with Strength unto the War*, and we gladly *fight the good Fight of Faith.* We rejoice, thro' him who liveth in our Hearts by Faith, to *lay hold of eternal Life.* This is our Rejoicing: that as our *Father worketh hitherto*, ſo (not by our own Might or Wiſdom, but through the Power of his Spirit freely given in Chriſt Jeſus) we alſo work the Works of GOD. And may he work in us, whatſoever is well-pleaſing in his Sight! To whom be the Praiſe for ever and ever!

The Means of Grace.

A

SERMON

On MALACHI iii. 7.

MALACHI iii. 7.

Ye are gone away from mine Ordinances, and have not kept them.

1. BUT are there any *Ordinances* now, since Life and Immortality were brought to Light by the Gospel? Are there under the Christian Dispensation, any *Means* ordain'd of GOD, as the usual Chanels of his Grace? This Question could never have been proposed, in the Apostolical Church, unless by one who openly avow'd himself to be a Heathen; the whole Body of Christians being agreed, that Christ had ordain'd certain outward Means, for conveying his Grace into the Souls of Men. Their constant Practice set this beyond all Dispute; for so long as *all that believed were together, and had all Things common*, (Acts ii. 44.) *they continued stedfastly in the teaching of the Apostles, and in the breaking of Bread and in Prayers*, ver. 42.

2. But in Process of Time, when *the Love of many waxed cold*, some began to mistake the *Means* for the *End*, and to place Religion, rather in doing those outward Works, than in a Heart renewed after the Image of GOD. They forgot, that *the End of* every *Commandment is Love, out of a pure Heart, with Faith unfeigned:* The

loving the Lord their God with all their Heart, and their Neighbour as themſelves; and the being purified from Pride, Anger, and evil Deſire, by a *Faith of the Operation of GOD*. Others ſeemed to imagine, that tho' Religion did not principally conſiſt in theſe outward Means, yet there was ſomething in them wherewith God was well pleaſed, ſomething that would ſtill make them acceptable in his Sight, tho' they were not exact in the weightier Matters of the Law, in Juſtice, Mercy, and the Love of God.

3. It is evident, in thoſe who abuſed them thus, they did not conduce to the End for which they were ordain'd. Rather, the Things which ſhould have been for their Health, were to them an Occaſion of falling. They were ſo far from receiving any Bleſſing therein, that they only drew down a Curſe upon their Head: ſo far from growing more heavenly in Heart and Life, that they were twofold more the Children of Hell than before. Others clearly perceiving, That theſe Means did not convey the Grace of God to thoſe Children of the Devil, began from this particular Caſe to draw a General Concluſion, "That they were not Means of conveying the Grace of God."

4. Yet the Number of thoſe who *abuſed* the Ordinances of God, was far greater than of thoſe who *deſpiſed* them, till certain Men aroſe, not only of great Underſtanding, (ſometimes join'd with conſiderable Learning) but who likewiſe appear'd to be Men of Love, experimentally acquainted with true, Inward Religion. Some of theſe were burning and ſhining Lights, Perſons famous in their Generations, and ſuch as had well

well deſerved of the Church of Chriſt, for ſtanding in the Gap againſt the Overflowings of Ungodlineſs.

It cannot be ſuppoſed, that theſe holy and venerable Men, intended any more at firſt, than to ſhew that Outward Religion is nothing worth, without the Religion of the Heart: That *GOD is a Spirit, and they who worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in Spirit and in Truth:* That therefore external Worſhip is loſt Labour, without a Heart devoted to GOD: That the Outward Ordinances of GOD then profit much, when they advance Inward Holineſs, but when they advance it not, are unprofitable and void, are lighter than Vanity: Yea, that when they are uſed, as it were, *in the Place* of This, they are an utter Abomination to the Lord.

5. Yet it is not ſtrange, if ſome of theſe, being ſtrongly convinced, of that horrid Profanation of the Ordinances of GOD, which had ſpread itſelf over the whole Church, and well nigh driven True Religion out of the World; in their fervent Zeal for the Glory of GOD, and the Recovery of Souls from that fatal Deluſion, ſpake as if Outward Religion were *abſolutely nothing*, as if it had *no* Place in the Religion of Chriſt. It is not ſurprizing at all, if they ſhould not always have expreſſed themſelves with ſufficient Caution. So that unwary Hearers might believe, they condemn'd all Outward Means, as altogether unprofitable; and as not deſigned of GOD to be the Ordinary Chanels of conveying his Grace into the Souls of Men.

Nay, it is not impoſſible, ſome of theſe holy Men did at length themſelves fall into this Opi-

nion: In particular, thoſe who, not by Choice, but by the Providence of God, were cut off from all theſe Ordinances: Perhaps wandring up and down, having no certain Abiding-place, or dwelling in Dens and Caves of the Earth. Theſe experiencing the Grace of God in themſelves, tho' they were depriv'd of all Outward Means, might infer, that the ſame Grace would be given to them, who of ſet Purpoſe abſtain'd from them.

6. And Experience ſhews, how eaſily this Notion ſpreads, and inſinuates itſelf into the Minds of Men: Eſpecially of thoſe who are throughly awaken'd out of the Sleep of Death, and begin to feel the Weight of their Sins, a Burthen too heavy to be born. Theſe are uſually impatient of their preſent State, and trying every Way to eſcape from it. They are always ready to catch at any new Thing, any new Propoſal of Eaſe or Happineſs. They have probably tried moſt Outward Means, and found no Eaſe in Them: It may be, more and more of Remorſe and Fear and Sorrow and Condemnation. It is eaſy therefore to perſuade theſe, That it is better for them to abſtain from all thoſe Means. They are already weary of ſtriving (as it ſeems) in vain, of labouring in the Fire: And are therefore glad of any Pretence to caſt aſide that, wherein their Soul has no Pleaſure; to give over the painful Strife, and ſink down into an indolent Inactivity.

II. 1. In the following Diſcourſe, I propoſe to examine at large, Whether there are any Means of Grace?

By

By *Means of Grace* I underſtand, Outward Signs, Words or Actions, ordain'd of GOD, and appointed for this End, to be the *Ordinary* Chanels whereby he might convey to Men, preventing, juſtifying or ſanctifying Grace.

I uſe this Expreſſion, "Means of Grace," becauſe I know none better, and becauſe it has been generally uſed in the Chriſtian Church for many Ages: In particular, by our own Church, which directs us to bleſs GOD, both for the "*Means of Grace* and Hopes of Glory;" and teaches us that a Sacrament is "An Outward Sign of Inward *Grace*, and a *Means* whereby we receive the ſame."

The Chief of theſe Means are Prayer, whether in ſecret, or with the great Congregation; ſearching the Scriptures (which implies Reading, Hearing and Meditating thereon) and receiving the Lord's Supper, eating Bread and drinking Wine in Remembrance of him; and theſe we believe to be ordain'd of GOD, as the ordinary Chanels of conveying his Grace to the Souls of Men.

2. But we allow, That the whole Value of the Means depends on their actual Subſervience to the End of Religion; that conſequently all theſe Means, when ſeparate from the End, are leſs than Nothing and Vanity; That if they do not actually conduce to the Knowledge and Love of GOD, they are not acceptable in his Sight; yea, rather, they are an Abomination before him; a Stink in his Noſtrils; he is weary to bear them. Above all, if they are uſed as a kind of *Commutation* for the Religion they were deſign'd to ſubſerve. It is not eaſy to find Words for the enor-

enormous Folly and Wickedneſs, of thus turning GOD's Arms againſt himſelf; of keeping Chriſtianity out of the Heart by thoſe very Means, which were ordain'd for the bringing it in.

3. We allow likewiſe, that all Outward Means whatever, if ſeparate from the Spirit of GOD, cannot profit at all, cannot conduce in any Degree either to the Knowledge or Love of GOD. Without Controverſy, the Help that is done upon Earth, he doth it himſelf. It is He alone, who by his own Almighty Power, worketh in us what is pleaſing in his Sight. And all outward Things, unleſs he work in them and by them, are mere weak and beggarly Elements. Whoſoever therefore imagines, there is any Intrinſick *Power*, in any Means whatſoever, does greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures, neither the Power of GOD. We know that there is no inherent Power, in the Words that are ſpoken in Prayer; in the Letter of Scripture read, the Sound thereof heard, or the Bread and Wine receiv'd in the Lord's Supper: But that it is GOD alone who is the Giver of every good Gift, the Author of all Grace; that the whole Power is of him, whereby thro' any of theſe, there is any Bleſſing convey'd to our Soul. We know likewiſe, that he is able to give the ſame Grace, tho' there were no Means on the Face of the Earth. In this Senſe we may affirm, that "with regard to GOD, there is no ſuch Thing as Means:" Seeing he is equally able to work whatſoever pleaſeth him, by Any, or by None at all.

4. We

4. We allow farther, That the uſe of all Means whatever, will never atone for one Sin; That it is the Blood of Chriſt alone, whereby any Sinner can be reconciled to GOD; there being no other Propitiation for our Sins, no other Fountain for Sin and Uncleanneſs. Every Believer in Chriſt is deeply convinced, that there is no *Merit*, but in Him: That there is no *Merit* in any of his own Works; not in uttering the Prayer, or ſearching the Scripture, or hearing the Word of GOD, or eating of that Bread and drinking of that Cup. So that if no more be intended by the Expreſſion ſome have uſed, "Chriſt is the only Means of Grace," than this, That he is the Only *Meritorious Cauſe* of it, it cannot be gain-ſaid by any who know the Grace of GOD.

5. Yet once more. We allow (tho' it is a melancholy Truth) that a large Proportion of thoſe who are called Chriſtians, do to this Day abuſe the Means of Grace, to the Deſtruction of their Souls. This is doubtleſs the Caſe with all thoſe who reſt content, in the Form of Godlineſs without the Power. Either they fondly preſume, they are Chriſtians already, becauſe they do thus and thus; altho' Chriſt was never yet reveal'd in their Hearts, nor the Love of GOD ſhed abroad therein: Or elſe they ſuppoſe, They ſhall infallibly be ſo, barely becauſe they uſe theſe Means: Idly dreaming (tho' perhaps hardly conſcious thereof) either that there is ſome Kind of *Power* therein, whereby ſooner or later (they know not when) they ſhall certainly be made Holy: Or that there is a Sort of *Merit* in uſing them,

them, which will ſurely move GOD to give them Holineſs, or accept them without it.

6. So little do they underſtanding that great Foundation of the whole Chriſtian Building, *By Grace ye are ſaved.* Ye are ſaved from your Sins, from the Guilt and Power thereof, ye are reſtored to the Favour and Image of GOD, not for any Works, *Merits* or Deſervings of yours, but by the free *Grace*, the mere Mercy of GOD, thro' the *Merits* of his well-beloved Son. Ye are thus ſaved, not by any *Power*, Wiſdom or Strength, which is in you, or in any other Creature: but merely thro' the Grace or *Power* of the Holy Ghoſt, which worketh all in all.

7. But the main Queſtion remains. We know this Salvation is the Gift and the Work of GOD. But how (may one ſay, who is convinced he hath it not) may I attain thereto? If you ſay, "Believe, and thou ſhalt be ſaved:" He anſwers, True; but how ſhall I believe? You reply, Wait upon GOD.—Well. But how am I to wait? In the Means of Grace, or out of them? Am I to wait for the Grace of GOD which bringeth Salvation, by uſing theſe Means, or by laying them aſide?

8. It cannot poſſibly be conceived, that the Word of GOD ſhould give no Direction in ſo important a Point: Or that the Son of GOD, who came down from Heaven for us Men and for our Salvation, ſhould have left us undetermined with regard to a Queſtion, wherein our Salvation is ſo nearly concern'd.

And in fact, he hath not left us undetermin'd; he hath ſhewn us the Way wherein we ſhould go. We have only to conſult the Oracles of GOD,

God, to inquire what is written there? And if we ſimply abide by their Deciſion, there can no poſſible Doubt remain.

III. 1. According to this, according to the Deciſion of Holy Writ, all who deſire the Grace of God, are to wait for it, in the Means which he hath ordained; in uſing, not in laying them aſide.

And firſt: All who deſire the Grace of God, are to wait for it in the Way of *Prayer*. This is the expreſs Direction of our Lord himſelf. In his Sermon upon the Mount, after explaining at large wherein Religion conſiſts, and deſcribing the main Branches of it, he adds, *Aſk and it ſhall be given you, ſeek and ye ſhall find, knock and it ſhall be opened unto you. For every one that aſketh receiveth, and he that ſeeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh, it ſhall be opened.* (*Matth.* vii. 7, 8.) Here we are in the plaineſt Manner directed to aſk, in order to, or as a *Means* of receiving; to ſeek in order to find, the Grace of God, the Pearl of great Price; and to knock, to continue aſking and ſeeking, if we would enter into his Kingdom.

2. That no Doubt might remain, our Lord labours this Point in a more peculiar Manner. He appeals to every Man's own Heart. *What Man is there of you, who if his Son aſk Bread, will give him a Stone? Or if he aſk a Fiſh, will he give him a Serpent? If ye then being evil know how to give good Gifts unto your Children, how much more ſhall your Father which is in Heaven*, the Father of Angels and Men, the Father of the Spirits

Spirits of all Fleſh, *give good things to them that aſk him?* ver. 9, 10, 11. Or, as he expreſſes himſelf on another Occaſion, including all good things in one, *How much more ſhall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that aſk him?* *Luke* xi. 13. It ſhould be particularly obſerved here, that the Perſons directed to aſk, had not then received the Holy Spirit. Nevertheleſs our Lord directs them to uſe this Means, and promiſes that it ſhould be effectual; that upon aſking they ſhould receive the Holy Spirit, from him whoſe Mercy is over all his Works.

3. The abſolute Neceſſity of uſing this Means if we would receive any Gift from God, yet farther appears from that remarkable Paſſage which immediately precedes theſe Words: *And he ſaid unto them* (whom he had juſt been teaching, how to pray) *which of you ſhall have a Friend, and ſhall go unto him at Midnight, and ſhall ſay unto him, Friend, lend me three Loaves —and he from within ſhall anſwer, Trouble me not—I cannot riſe and give thee: I ſay unto you, though he will not riſe and give him, becauſe he is his Friend, yet becauſe of his Importunity he will riſe, and give him as many as he needeth. And I ſay unto you, aſk and it ſhall be given you,* Luke xi. 5, 7, 8, 9. *Though he will not give him, becauſe he is his Friend, yet becauſe of his Importunity he will riſe and give him as many as he needeth.* How could our bleſſed Lord more plainly declare, That we may receive of God, by this Means, by importunately aſking, what otherwiſe we ſhould not receive at all!

4. *He*

4. *He ſpake alſo another Parable to this End, that Men ought always to pray, and not to faint,* till through this Means they ſhould receive of GOD, whatſoever Petition they aſked of him. *There was in a city a Judge which feared not GOD, neither regarded Man. And there was a Widow in that City, and ſhe came unto him, ſaying, Avenge me of my Adverſary. And he would not for a while; but afterwards he ſaid with himſelf, Though I fear not GOD, nor regard Man, yet becauſe this Widow troubleth me I will avenge her, leſt by her continual coming ſhe weary me.* Luke xviii. 1—4. The Application of this our Lord himſelf hath made. *Hear what the unjuſt Judge ſaith!* Becauſe ſhe continues to aſk, becauſe ſhe will take no Denial, therefore I will avenge her. *And ſhall not GOD avenge his own Elect, which cry Day and Night unto him? I tell you he will avenge them ſpeedily*—if they *pray and faint not.*

5. A Direction equally full and expreſs, to wait for the Bleſſings of GOD in private Prayer, together with a poſitive Promiſe, that by this Means we ſhall obtain the Requeſt of our Lips, he hath given us in thoſe well-known Words: *Enter into thy Cloſet, and when thou haſt ſhut thy Door, pray to thy Father which is in ſecret, and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret ſhall reward thee openly,* Matth. vi. 6.

6. If it be poſſible for any Direction to be more clear, it is that which GOD hath given us by the Apoſtle, with regard to Prayer of every kind, publick or private, and the Bleſſing annext thereto. *If any of you lack Wiſdom, let him aſk of*

of GOD, *that giveth to all Men liberally*, (if they aſk; otherwiſe *ye have not*, *becauſe ye aſk not*, Jam. iv. 2.) *and upbraideth not*, *and it ſhall be given him*, ch. i. 5.

If it be objected, "But this is no Direction to Unbelievers; to them who know not the pardoning Grace of GOD: For the Apoſtle adds, *But let him aſk in Faith*: otherwiſe, *let him not think that he ſhall receive any thing of the Lord.*" I anſwer, The Meaning of the Word *Faith* in this Place, is fix'd by the Apoſtle himſelf, (as if it were on purpoſe to obviate this Objection) in the Words immediately following: *Let him aſk in Faith*, *nothing wavering*, nothing *doubting*, μηδὲν διακρινόμενος. Not doubting but GOD heareth his Prayer, and will fulfil the Deſire of his Heart.

The groſs, blaſphemous Abſurdity of ſuppoſing *Faith* in this Place to be taken in the full Chriſtian Meaning, appears hence: It is ſuppoſing the Holy Ghoſt to direct a Man who knows he has not this Faith (which is here term'd *Wiſdom*) to aſk it of GOD, with a poſitive Promiſe that *it ſhall be given him*; and then immediately to ſubjoin, That it ſhall not be given him, unleſs he have it before he aſks for it! But who can bear ſuch a Suppoſition? From this Scripture, therefore, as well as thoſe cited above, we muſt infer, that all who deſire the Grace of GOD, are to wait for it in the Way of Prayer.

7. *Secondly*, All who deſire the Grace of GOD, are to wait for it in *ſearching the Scriptures*.

Our Lord's Direction with regard to the Uſe of this Means, is likewiſe plain and clear. *Search*

the

the Scriptures, ſaith he to the unbelieving *Jews*, —*for they teſtify of me*, John v. 39. And for this very End did he direct them to ſearch the Scriptures, that they might *believe in him.*

The Objection, "That this is not a Command, but only an Aſſertion, that they did ſearch the Scriptures," is ſhameleſly falſe. I deſire thoſe who urge it, to let us know, how a Command can be more clearly expreſs'd, than in thoſe Terms, Ἐρευνᾶτε τὰς γραφὰς. It is as peremptory as ſo many Words can make it.

And what a Bleſſing from God attends the Uſe of this Means, appears from what is recorded concerning the *Bereans*; who after hearing St. *Paul*, *ſearched the Scriptures daily, whether thoſe things were ſo? Therefore many of them believed*; found the Grace of God, in the Way which he had ordained. *Acts.* xvii. 12, 13.

It is probable, indeed, that in ſome of thoſe who had *received the Word with all Readineſs of Mind*, *Faith came* (as the ſame Apoſtle ſpeaks) *by hearing*, and was only confirm'd by *reading* the Scriptures. But it was obſerved above, that under the general Term of *ſearching the Scriptures*, both Hearing, Reading, and Meditating, are contained.

8. And that this is a Means whereby God not only gives, but alſo confirms and increaſes true Wiſdom, we learn from the Words of St. *Paul* to *Timothy*: *From a Child thou haſt known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wiſe unto Salvation, thro' Faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus*, 2 Tim. iii. 15. The ſame Truth (namely, that this is the great Means God has ordained for conveying

conveying his manifold Grace to Man) is delivered, in the fulleſt Manner that can be conceived, in the Words which immediately follow: *All Scripture is given by Inſpiration of GOD*; (conſequently, all Scripture is infallibly true;) *and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs: To the end that the Man of GOD may be perfect, throughly furniſhed unto all good Works*, ver. 16, 17.

9. It ſhould be obſerved, that this is ſpoken primarily and directly, of the Scriptures which *Timothy* had *known from a Child*; which muſt have been thoſe of the Old Teſtament, for the New was not then wrote. How far then was St. *Paul* (though he was *not a whit behind the very Chief of the Apoſtles*, nor therefore, I preſume, behind any Man now upon Earth) from making light of the Old Teſtament! Behold this, leſt ye one Day *wonder and periſh*, ye who make ſo ſmall Account of one Half of the Oracles of God! Yea, and that Half of which the Holy Ghoſt expreſly declares, That it is *profitable*, as a Means ordained of GOD, for this very thing, *for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs: to the End the Man of GOD may be perfect, throughly furniſhed unto all good Works.*

10. Nor is this profitable only for the Men of GOD, for thoſe who walk already in the Light of his Countenance; but alſo for thoſe who are yet in Darkneſs, ſeeking him whom they know not. Thus St. *Peter*, *We have alſo a more ſure Word of Prophecy*: Literally, *and we have*

have the prophetick Word more ſure: Καὶ ἔχομεν βεβαιότερον τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον. confirmed by our being *Eye-witneſſes of his Majeſty*, and *hearing the Voice which came from the excellent Glory) unto which* (prophetick Word; ſo he ſtiles the holy Scriptures) *ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a Light that ſhineth in a dark Place, until the Day dawn, and the Day-ſtar ariſe in your Hearts*, 2 Pet. i. 19. Let all, therefore, who deſire that Day to dawn upon their Hearts, wait for it in *ſearching the Scriptures.*

11. *Thirdly*, All who deſire an Increaſe of the Grace of GOD, are to wait for it in partaking of the Lord's Supper. For this alſo is a Direction himſelf hath given. *The ſame Night in which he was betrayed, he took Bread, and brake it, and ſaid, Take, eat: this is my Body*, (that is, the ſacred Sign of my Body) *This do in Remembrance of me. Likewiſe, he took the Cup, ſaying, This Cup is the New Teſtament*, or Covenant, *in my Blood*, (the ſacred Sign of that Covenant) *this do ye— in Remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do ſhew forth the Lord's Death till he come*, 2 Cor. xi. 23, *&c.* Ye openly exhibit the ſame, by theſe viſible Signs, before GOD, and Angels, and Men. Ye manifeſt your ſolemn Remembrance of his Death, till he cometh in the Clouds of Heaven.

Only *let a Man* firſt *examine himſelf*, whether he underſtand the Nature and Deſign of this holy Inſtitution, and whether he really deſire to be himſelf made conformable to the Death of Chriſt:

Chriſt: *and ſo*, nothing doubting, *let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup*, ver. 28.

Here then the Direction firſt given by our Lord, is expreſly repeated by the Apoſtle. Let him eat; let him drink: (ἐσθιέτω· πινέτω· both in the Imperative Mood.) Words not implying a bare Permiſſion only, but a clear explicit Command; a Command to all thoſe either who already are filled with Peace and Joy in believing, or who can truly ſay, "The Remembrance of our Sins is grievous unto us, the Burden of them is intolerable."

12. And that this is alſo an ordinary ſtated Means of receiving the Grace of God, is evident from thoſe Words of the Apoſtle, which occur in the preceding Chapter? *The Cup of Bleſſing which we bleſs, is it not the Communion*, or Communication, *of the Blood of Chriſt? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Chriſt?* (1 Cor. x. 16.) Is not the eating of that Bread, and the drinking of that Cup, the outward, viſible Means, whereby God conveys into our Souls all that ſpiritual Grace, that Righteouſneſs, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt, which were purchaſed by the Body of Chriſt once broken, and the Blood of Chriſt once ſhed for us? Let all, therefore, who truly deſire the Grace of God, eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup.

IV. 1. But as plainly as God hath pointed out the Way, wherein he will be inquired after, innumerable are the Objections which Men, wiſe

wiſe in their own Eyes, have from time to time raiſed againſt it. It may be needful to conſider a few of theſe; not becauſe they are of Weight in themſelves, but becauſe they have ſo often been uſed, eſpecially of late Years, to turn the Lame out of the Way; yea, to trouble and ſubvert thoſe who did run well, till Satan appeared as an Angel of Light.

The firſt and Chief of theſe is, "You cannot uſe theſe Means (as you call them) without *truſting* in them." I pray, where is this written? I expect you ſhould ſhew me plain Scripture for your Aſſertion. Otherwiſe I dare not receive it: Becauſe I am not convinced, that your are wiſer than GOD.

If it really had been as you aſſert, it is certain Chriſt muſt have known it. And if he had known it, he would ſurely have warned us, he would have revealed it long ago. Therefore becauſe he has not, becauſe there is no Tittle of this in the whole Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, I am as fully aſſured your Aſſertion is falſe, as that this Revelation is of GOD.

"However, leave them off for a ſhort time, to ſee whether you truſted in them or no." So I am to diſobey GOD, in order to know, whether I truſt in obeying him! And do you avow this Advice? Do you deliberately teach, to *do Evil, that Good may come?* O tremble at the Sentence of GOD againſt ſuch Teachers! Their *Damnation is juſt.*

"Nay, if you are troubled, when you leave them off, it is plain, you truſted in them." By no means. If I am troubled when I wilfully diſobey GOD, it is plain his Spirit is ſtill ſtriving

with me. But if I am not troubled at wilful Sin, it is plain, I am given up to a reprobate Mind.

But what do you mean by "*Truſting* in them?" Looking for the Bleſſing of GOD therein? Believing, that if I wait in this Way I ſhall attain, what otherwiſe I ſhould not? So I do. And ſo I will, GOD being my Helper, even to my Life's End. By the Grace of GOD, I will *thus* truſt in them, till the Day of my Death; that is, I will believe, that whatever, GOD hath promiſed, he is faithful alſo to perform. And ſeeing he hath promiſed to bleſs me in this Way, I *truſt* it ſhall be according to his Word.

2. It has been, ſecondly, objected, "This is ſeeking Salvation by Works." Do you know the Meaning of the Expreſſion you uſe? What is, "Seeking Salvation by Works?" In the Writings of St. *Paul*, it means, either ſeeking to be ſaved, by obſerving the Ritual Works of the Moſaic Law, or expecting Salvation for the Sake of our own Works, by the Merit of our own Righteouſneſs. But how is either of theſe implied, in my waiting in the Way GOD has ordained, and expecting that he will meet me there, becauſe he has promiſed ſo to do?

I do expect, that he will fulfil his Word, that he will meet and bleſs me in this Way. Yet not for the Sake of any Works which I have done, nor for the Merit of my Righteouſneſs: But merely through the Merits and Sufferings and Love of his Son, in whom he is always well-pleaſed.

3. It has been vehemently objected, Thirdly, that Chriſt is the only Means of Grace. I anſwer, this is mere playing upon Words. Explain your Term, and the Objection vaniſhes away.

When

When we ſay, " Prayer is a Means of Grace," we underſtand, a Chanel through which the Grace of GOD is convey'd. When you ſay, " Chriſt is the Means of Grace," you underſtand, the ſole Price and Purchaſer of it: Or, that *no Man cometh unto the Father, but thro' him.* And who denies it? but this is utterly wide of the Queſtion.

4. But does not the Scripture (it has been objected, Fourthly) direct us to *wait* for Salvation? Does not *David* ſay, *My Soul waiteth upon GOD: for of him cometh my Salvation?* And does not *Iſaiah* teach us the ſame thing, ſaying, *O Lord, we have waited for thee?* All this cannot be denied. Seeing it is the Gift of GOD, we are undoubtedly to *wait* on him for Salvation. But how ſhall we wait? If GOD himſelf has appointed a Way, can you find a better Way of waiting for him? But, that he hath appointed a Way, hath been ſhewn at large, and alſo what that Way is. The very Words of the Prophet which you cite, put this out of all Queſtion. For the whole Sentence runs thus; *In the Way of thy Judgments*, or Ordinances, *O Lord, have we waited for thee.* (*Iſai.* xxvi. 8.) And in the very ſame Way did *David* wait, as his own Words abundantly teſtify: *I have waited for thy ſaving Health, O Lord, and have kept thy Law. Teach me, O Lord, the Way of thy Statutes, and I ſhall keep it unto the End.*

5. " Yea, ſay ſome, but GOD has appointed another Way, *ſtand ſtill and ſee the Salvation of GOD.*

Let us examine the Scriptures to which you refer. The firſt of them, with the Context, runs thus:

And when Pharaoh *drew nigh, the Children of* Iſrael *lift up their Eyes—and they were ſore afraid. And they ſaid unto* Moſes, *Becauſe there were no Graves in* Egypt, *haſt thou taken us away to die in the Wilderneſs? And* Moſes *ſaid unto the People, Fear ye not: Stand ſtill, and ſee the Salvation of the Lord. And the Lord ſaid unto* Moſes, *ſpeak unto the Children of* Iſrael, *that they go forward. But lift thou up thy Rod, and ſtretch out thine Hand over the Sea and divide it. And the Children of* Iſrael *ſhall go on dry Ground through the Midſt of the Sea, Exod.* xiv. 10, *&c.*

This was the *Salvation* of GOD, which they *ſtood ſtill* to ſee, by *marching forward* with all their Might!

The other Paſſage wherein this Expreſſion occurs, ſtands thus. *There came ſome that told* Jehoſhaphat *ſaying, There cometh a great Multitude againſt thee, from beyond the Sea. And* Jehoſhaphat *feared, and ſet himſelf to ſeek the Lord, and proclaimed a Faſt throughout all* Judah. *And* Judah *gathered themſelves together to aſk Help of the Lord, even out of all the Cities they came to ſeek the Lord. And* Jehoſhaphat *ſtood in the Congregation, in the Houſe of the Lord — Then upon* Jahaziel *came the Spirit of the Lord.—And he ſaid —Be not diſmayed by reaſon of this great Multitude — To-morrow go ye down againſt them, ye ſhall not need to fight in this Battle. Set yourſelves: Stand ye ſtill, and ſee the Salvation of the Lord — And they roſe early in the Morning and went forth. And when they began to ſing and to praiſe, the Lord*

ſet

ſet Ambuſhments againſt the Children of Moab, Ammon, *and* Mount Seir—*and every one helped to deſtroy another*, 2 Chron. xx. 2, *&c.*

Such was the Salvation which the Children of *Judah* ſaw. But how does all this prove, that we ought not to wait for the Grace of God, in the Means which he hath ordained?

6. I ſhall mention but one Objection more, which indeed does not properly belong to this Head. Nevertheleſs, becauſe it has been ſo frequently urged, I may not wholly paſs it by.

"Does not St. *Paul* ſay, *If ye be dead with Chriſt, why are ye ſubject to Ordinances? Col.* ii. 20. Therefore a Chriſtian, one that is *dead with Chriſt*, need not uſe the Ordinances any more."

So you ſay, "If I am a Chriſtian, I am not ſubject to the Ordinances of Chriſt!" Surely, by the Abſurdity of this, you muſt ſee at the firſt Glance, that the Ordinances here mentioned cannot be the Ordinances of Chriſt! That they muſt needs be the *Jewiſh* Ordinances, to which it is certain, a Chriſtian is no longer a Subject.

And the ſame undeniably appears from the Words immediately following, *Touch not, taſte not, handle not*—all evidently referring to the antient Ordinances of the *Jewiſh* Law.

So that this Objection is the weakeſt of all. And in ſpight of all, that great Truth muſt ſtand unſhaken, That all who deſire the Grace of God, are to wait for it, in the Means which he hath ordained.

V. 1. But this being allowed, that all who deſire the Grace of God, are to wait for it in the Means he hath ordained: It may ſtill be enquired,

how thoſe Means ſhould be uſed, both as to the *Order*, and the *Manner* of uſing them;

With regard to the former, we may obſerve, there is a Kind of Order, wherein GOD himſelf is generally pleaſed, to uſe theſe Means, in bringing a Sinner to Salvation. A ſtupid, ſenſeleſs Wretch is going on in his own Way, not having GOD in all his Thoughts, when GOD comes upon him unawares, perhaps by an awakening Sermon or Converſation, perhaps by ſome awful Providence; or it may be by an immediate Stroke of his convincing Spirit, without any outward Means at all. Having now a Deſire to flee from the Wrath to come, he purpoſely goes to *hear*, how it may be done. If he finds a Preacher who ſpeaks to the Heart, he is amazed, and begins *ſearching the Scriptures*, whether theſe Things are ſo? The more he *hears* and *reads*, the more convinced he is; and the more he *meditates* thereon, Day and Night. Perhaps he finds ſome other Book, which explains and inforces what he has heard and read in Scripture. And by all theſe Means, the Arrows of Conviction ſink deeper into his Soul. He begins alſo to *talk* of the Things of GOD, which are ever uppermoſt in his Thoughts: Yea, and to talk with GOD, to *pray* to him, altho' through Fear and Shame, he ſcarce knows what to ſay. But whether he can ſpeak or no, he cannot but pray, were it only in *Groans which cannot be uttered.* Yet being in doubt, whether *the high and lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity* will regard ſuch a Sinner as him, he wants to pray with thoſe who know GOD, with the Faithful, in the *Great Congregation.* But here he obſerves others go up to the *Table of*

the Lord. He conſiders, Chriſt has ſaid, " Do this!" How is it, that I do not? I am too great a Sinner. I am not fit. I am not worthy. After ſtruggling with theſe Scruples a while, he breaks through. And thus he continues in GOD's Way, in hearing, reading, meditating, praying, and partaking of the Lord's Supper, till GOD, in the manner that pleaſes him, ſpeaks to his Heart, *Thy Faith hath ſaved thee? Go in Peace.*

2. By obſerving this Order of GOD, we may learn what Means to recommend to any particular Soul. If any of theſe will reach a ſtupid, careleſs Sinner, it is probably *Hearing* or *Converſation.* To ſuch therefore we might recommend theſe, if he has ever any Thought about Salvation. To one who begins to feel the Weight of his Sins, not only Hearing the Word of GOD, but *Reading* it too, and perhaps other *ſerious Books*, may be a Means of deeper Conviction. May you not adviſe him alſo, to *meditate* on what he reads, that it may have its full Force upon his Heart? Yea, and to *ſpeak* thereof and not be aſhamed, particularly among thoſe who walk in the ſame Path. When Trouble and Heavineſs take hold upon him, ſhould you not then earneſtly exhort him, to pour out his Soul before GOD? Always to *pray and not to faint?* And when he feels the Worthleſſneſs of his own Prayers, are you not to work together with GOD, and remind him of going up into *the Houſe of the Lord*, and praying with all them that fear him? But if he does this, the *dying Word* of his Lord, will ſoon be brought to his Remembrance: A plain Intimation, that this is the Time, when we ſhould ſecond the Motions of the Bleſſed Spirit. And thus may we lead him

Step

Step by Step, through all the Means which GOD has ordained; not according to our own Will, but juſt as the Providence and the Spirit of GOD go before and open the Way.

3. Yet as we find no Command in Holy Writ, for any particular Order to be obſerved herein, ſo neither do the Providence and the Spirit of GOD, adhere to any without Variation: But the Means into which different Men are led, and in which they find the Bleſſing of GOD, are varied, tranſpoſed and combined together, a thouſand different Ways. Yet ſtill our Wiſdom is, to follow the Leadings of his Providence and his Spirit: To be guided herein (more eſpecially as to the Means wherein we ourſelves ſeek the Grace of GOD) partly by his outward Providence, giving us the Opportunity of uſing ſometimes one Means, ſometimes another: Partly by our Experience, which it is whereby his free Spirit is pleaſed moſt to work in our Heart. And in the mean time, the ſure and general Rule for all who groan for the Salvation of GOD, is this, Whenever Opportunity ſerves, uſe all the Means which GOD has ordained. For who knows, in which GOD will meet thee, with the Grace that bringeth Salvation?

4. As to the *Manner* of uſing them, whereon indeed it wholly depends, whether they ſhould convey any Grace at all to the Uſer, it behoves us, Firſt, always to retain a lively Senſe, that GOD is above all Means. Have a Care therefore of limiting the Almighty. He doth whatſoever and whenſoever it pleaſeth him. He can convey his Grace, either in or out of any of the Means which he hath appointed. Perhaps he will. *Who hath*

hath known the Mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his Counſellor? Look then every Moment for his Appearing! Be it at the Hour you are employed in his Ordinances; or before, or after that Hour. Or when you are hindered therefrom. He is not hindered. He is always ready: Always able, always willing to ſave. *It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good!*

Secondly, *Before* you uſe any Means, let it be deep impreſt on your Soul, "There is no *Power* in this. It is in itſelf a poor, dead, empty Thing: Separate from GOD; it is a dry Leaf, a Shadow. Neither is there any *Merit* in my uſing this; nothing intrinſically pleaſing to GOD, nothing whereby I deſerve any Favour at his Hands, no, not a Drop of Water to cool my Tongue. But becauſe GOD bids, therefore I do; becauſe he directs me to wait in this Way, therefore here I wait for his free Mercy, whereof cometh my Salvation.

Settle this in your Heart, that the *Opus operatum*, the mere Work done profiteth nothing: That there is no *Power* to ſave, but in the Spirit of GOD; no *Merit*, but in the Blood of Chriſt: That conſequently, even what GOD ordains, conveys no Grace to the Soul, if you truſt not in him alone. On the other hand, he that does truly truſt in him, cannot fall ſhort of the Grace of GOD, even tho' he were cut off from every Outward Ordinance, tho' he were ſhut up in the Center of the Earth.

Thirdly, *In* uſing all Means, ſeek GOD alone. In and through every Outward Thing, look ſingly to the *Power* of his Spirit, and the *Merits* of his Son. Beware you do not ſtick in the

Work

Work itſelf; if you do, it is all loſt Labour. Nothing ſhort of GOD can ſatisfy your Soul. Therefore eye him, in all, through all, and above all.

Remember alſo, to uſe all Means, *as Means*: As ordain'd, not for their own Sake, but in order to the Renewal of your Soul in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs. If therefore they actually tend to this, well. But if not, they are Dung and Droſs.

Laſtly, *After* you have uſed any of theſe, take care, how you value yourſelf thereon: How you congratulate yourſelf, as having done ſome great Thing. This is turning all into Poiſon. Think, "If GOD was not there, what does this avail? Have I not been adding Sin to Sin? How long! O Lord! ſave or I periſh! O lay not this Sin to my Charge!" If God was there, if his Love flowed into your Heart, you have forgot, as it were, the Outward Work. You ſee, you know, you feel, GOD is All in All. Be abaſed. Sink down before him. Give him all the Praiſe. Let GOD *in all Things be glorified through Chriſt Jeſus.* Let *all* your *Bones cry out, My Song ſhall be always of the Loving-kindneſs of the Lord: With my Mouth will I ever be telling of thy Truth, from one Generation to another!*

The END of the FIRST VOLUME.

BOOKS

Publiſh'd by

Mr. JOHN *and* CHARLES WESLEY.

1 HYMNS and Sacred Poems, vol. 1. Price 3s.
2 Ditto, vol. 2 and 3. both bound together, Price 3s. 4th Edition.
3 Collection of Pſalms and Hymns, 3d Edition. Price bound 1s.
4 Hymns for the Sacrament. Price 1s. 4d. bound.
5 Hymns for Times of Perſecution. pr. 6d.
6 Hymns for Times of Trouble. pr. 1d.
7 Hymns for the Aſcenſion of our Lord. pr. 1d.
7 Hymns for the Nativity. pr. 2d.
8 Hyms for the Nativity. pr. 1d.
8 Hymns on the Reſurrection. pr. 2d.
9 Collection of Hymns. 2d Edit. pr. 3d.
9 Hymns on the Aſcenſion. pr. 1d.
10 Hymns on God's Everlaſting Love. pr. 3d.
10 Hymns for Whitſunday. pr. 2d.
11 Ditto, pr. 4d.
12 Elegy on Robert Jones; Eſq; pr. 6d.
13 Collection of Moral and Sacred Poems, 3 vols. pr. bound 10s.
14 An Extract of the Rev. Mr. John Weſley's Journal. Vol. 1, 2, 3, 4. pr. 3s. bound.
15 The Character of a Methodiſt. pr. 1d. 5th Edition.
16 The Principles of a Methodiſt. pr. 2d. 2d Edition.
17 Rules of the United Societies. 4th Edit. pr. 1d.
18 The Almoſt Chriſtian, a Sermon. pr. 1d. 7th Edit.
19 A Sermon on Epheſians v. 14. 10th. Edit. pr. 3d.
20 A Sermon on Salvation by Faith. pr. 1d. 7th Edition.
21 Scriptural Chriſtianity. A Sermon preach'd before the Univerſity of Oxford, Aug. 24, 1744. 5th Edit. pr. 3d.
22 Free Grace, a Sermon, pr. 2d. 3d Edit
23 Chriſtian Perfection, a Sermon. 2d Edit. pr. 2d.
24 The Doctrine of Salvation, Faith and good Works. price 1d. 6th Edition.
25 An earneſt Perſuaſive to keep the Sabbath holy. pr. 2s. a hun.
26 Swear not at all. pr. 2s. a hundred.
27 A Word to a Drunkard. 2s. a hundred.
28 A Word to a Proteſtant. 2s. a hundred.
29 Modern Chriſtianity. pr. 2d.
30 A Word in Seaſon, or Advice to an Engliſhman. pr. 1d.
31 Advice to a Soldier. pr. 1d.
31 Extract of the Pilgrims Progreſs. 2d Edit. pr. 4d.
32 An Extract of the Life of Mr. Haliburton. pr. 6d.
33 An Extract of the Life of M. de Renty. pr. 6d.

34 A ſhort Account of the Death of Mrs. Hannah Richardſon pr. 1d. 5th Edit.
35 Chriſtian Prudence. pr. 3d. 2d Edit.
36 Reflections upon the Conduct of Human Life, pr. 3d. 2d Edit.
37 Inſtructions for Children, pr. 3d. 2d Edit.
38 Leſſons for Children. pr. 6d.
39 An Extract of Thomas a Kempis's Chriſtian Pattern, pr. 8d.
40 An Extract from a Treatiſe on Chriſtian Perfection. price ſtitch'd 1s.
41 An Extract from a ſerious Call to a holy Life. pr. bd. 2s.
42 Life of God in the Soul of Man, pr. 4d.
43 Diſcourſes on the Redemption of Man. pr. 6d.
44 Nicodemus: or a Treatiſe on the Fear of Man. Price 3d. 3d Edition.
45 The Nature and Deſign of Chriſtianity, pr. 1d. 4th Edit.
46 A Collection of Forms of Prayers, pr. 3d. 8th Edit.
47 Ditto Family Prayers. 4th Edit. pr. 2d.
48 A Companion to the Altar. 3d Edit. pr. 2d.
49 New England Narrative, pr. 4d.
50 Marks of the Spirit. pr. 4d.
51 Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New-England. pr. 8d.
51 Earneſt Appeal to Men of Reaſon and Religion. 3d Edit. pr. 6d.
52 A farther Appeal, part 1ſt. pr. 9.
53 A farther Appeal, part 2d and 3d. pr. 1s.
54 Mr. Whitefield's Tryal, pr. 1d.
55 The Caſe of John Nelſon, 3d Edit. pr. 3d.
56 An Anſwer to the Rev. Mr. Church's Remarks. 2d Edit. pr. 4th.
57 A ſecond Anſwer to the Rev. Mr. Church. pr. 6d.
58 A Dialogue between a Predeſtinarian and his Friend. pr. 1d. 2d Edit.
59 Serious Conſiderations concerning Election and Reprobation. price 1d.
60 Ditto on Abſolute Predeſtination. pr. 2d.
61 The Scripture Doctrine concerning Election, &c. pr. 2d.
62 Thoughts on Marriage and Celibacy. 2d Edit pr. 1d.
63 A ſhort View of the Differences between the Moravian Brethren and the Rev. Mr. Weſleys, pr. 2d.
64 Dialogue between an Antinomian and his Friend. pr. 1d.
65 Second Dialogue between an Antinomian, &c. pr. 1d.
66 Mr. Baxter's Aphoriſms concerning Juſtification. pr. 3d.
67 A Word to Saints and Sinners. pr. 1d.
68 A Collection of Receipts, pr. 2d.
69 A Collection of Tunes. pr. 3d.
70 Sermons on Several Occaſions, vol. 1. pr. 2s. 6d.